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Acoustic Interculturalism: The Performativity of Sound and a Hermeneutic of Listening in/to Intercultural Performance

A Thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Drama
School of Drama, Film and Music
Trinity College Dublin
The University of Dublin

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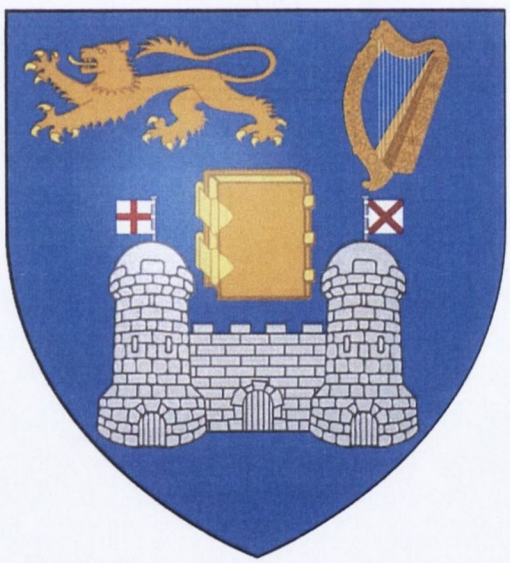

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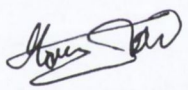

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Summary

Studies of intercultural performance have been very much concerned with the politics of cultural practice, the authority of cultural traditions, the location of culture(s) in the interstices of exchange, and the theorising of cultural transactions on the stage. Critical studies and performance analyses have focussed largely on the *mise en scène*, the visual texts, and the visuality of the intercultural disregarding, consequently, the importance of sound and music in generating performance meaning. Little has been done to critically examine the role sound and music play in performance, and the ways in which an aural experience and an awareness of the interchanges in form (musical instruments) and style (performance traditions), can serve to illuminate what is oftentimes regarded as a confusing hybrid of cultures presented on stage. This thesis thus seeks to capitalise on this need for a *listening* to the sounds of interculturalism and wishes to examine a reception aesthetics employing acoustemological (the study of sound environments) and akoumenological (a phenomenology of listening) frameworks of analysis. As cases in point, the thesis will examine the soundscapes, and the performativity of sound, in various 'models' of intercultural theatre in particular those by Ariane Mnouchkine, Ong Keng Sen, Lin Zhaohua and Yukio Ningawa.

Culture is as much heard as it is to be seen. To listen interculturally is to devote auditory attention to the interstices of sound's collocation and dislocation. As such, the thesis would examine the use, extraction, and adaptation of culturally prescriptive sound / music so as to address the question "what is performed when cultural sounds and languages (both acoustic and linguistic) are overlaid, mixed, combined and commingled?" Considered in the broader framework of performance analysis, the thesis would investigate this interactivity of (cultural) sounds, as performative texts, and their role in the construction of the intercultural spectacle. It will advance the following critical questions as it attempts to establish ways of comprehending the intercultural acoustically: How does one listen inter-culturally? How does sound demarcate cultural histories and/or cultural spaces? What cultural-political negotiations and contestations reverberate with these audial relations? Do these sounds fortify the hegemonies of a West/East dichotomy and mirror the prevailing neo-imperialistic discourses found in visual spectacle? Can sound provide a new means of accessing and comprehending the intercultural?

The discussion will be framed by contemporary critical and cultural theories of alterity, Orientalism, as well as ethnomusicological approaches and World Music theories. Such a diverse methodological approach seeks to accommodate a diversity of possible

'readings' of sound and music. It is distinctly resultant from the range of intercultural performances that

have emerged both in the West and East, and where a 'definitive' approach to the analysis of interculturalism is consequentially impossible.

An analysis of the performativity of sound begins with an understanding of the nature of sound and its importance in intercultural performance. The thesis thus begins with an exploration of the concepts of acoustemology and soundscape, and of the ways one listens to space as s/he listens to sound. It posits ways of listening to the intercultural and explores the possibilities of sound's interrogation of geo-political topographies. The following chapters then attempt an application of the various approaches to listening interculturally. In Ariane Mnouchkine's *Tambours Sur La Digue* (2003), a political listening is posited as one reflects upon an Orientalist acoustemology where the soundscape reveals an exoticisation of the Far East through surface plays and simulations of Eastern musical traditions. The currents of appropriation are, however, not a 'one-way-street' but a mutually predatory one in which the East (counter)appropriates Western sounds and music. The third chapter explores this possibility through a musicological and ethnomusicological analysis of the pop music used in Lin Zhaohua's *Richard III* (理查三世) (2001) and Yukio Ninagawa's Kabuki *Twelfth Night* (*NINAGAWA* 十二夜) (2007). The East, as it is heard, performs a 'self' through a process of echolocation. The fourth chapter explores a different geo-political space of New Asia, exemplified by Ong's avant-garde intercultural performance *Desdemona* (2000). Through an ethnomusicological analysis as well as a critical and anthropological consideration of performance forms and their transmutation, this section describes an acoustemology of dislocated and fragmented Asia, one that is continually silenced and voided. The final chapter engages with the pertinent and pervasive question of universalism both in music and in theatre. Examining Ong's *Awaking* (2008), the chapter seeks to examine the possibilities of music as a new universal language of interculturalism, implied by Ong's concordance of Eastern and Western sounds.

Seen collectively, these various chapters explore acoustic interculturalism from varied cultural positions that now see greater inter-action and inter-activity on the stage. In many ways, musical experience is social experience social experiences are a priori political. Listening deeply to the soundscapes of these productions reveal the cultural and political contestations – the slippages, overlaps, gaps and entanglements of cultural negotiation. In a world that becomes increasingly globalised, an attentive listening to these performance hybrids may yet reveal new understandings and appreciation of difference – or perhaps the absence of it.

Introduction:

The Topography of an Acoustic Interculturalism

Interculturalism: A Theatre of the Contemporary

Contemporary theatre has, as Erika Fischer-Lichte notes, been increasingly adopting elements of foreign theatre traditions and practices (Pavis, *Intercultural Reader* 27). Though made in 1996, the observation has become a truism when one considers the many cross-cultural and intercultural works of the early twenty-first century. Intercultural theatre of the late twentieth century, beginning in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and exemplified by Western directors such as Ariane Mnouchkine, Peter Brook, Robert Wilson, Eugenio Barba, advances a performance philosophy of an active adoption and adaptation of Other performance traditions as well as narratives in an attempted 'fusion' with Western theatrical principles or modes to create new postmodern hybrid products. As Julie Holledge and Joanne Tompkins observe, such interculturalisms on the stage "have been complicit with a postmodern licence to borrow theatrical techniques from different cultures within a Western defined global and theatre practice" (2).

Such a dramatic strategy is not new, particularly in European theatre, and can been traced to the works of Goethe who developed a repertoire for the Weimar theatre which engaged important dramatic works from European theatre history, Max Reinhardt who experimented with Japanese *hanamichi*, Bertolt Brecht who in attempting to advance his notions of *Verfremdungseffekt* adopted Chinese performance art and popular myths as dramatic material, and Antonin Artaud who looked to Balinese theatre as an alternative form.[1] Yet the cultural exchange and cross-cultural currents in the theatre of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries have evolved in a far more corrugated and complex manner; a multiplicity of performance forms claims some element of intercultural interaction and cross-cultural 'borrowing' today. Furthermore, postcolonial consciousness in the performance arts, the prevalence of critical and cultural theory, and the politicisation of the theatre has led to a political interrogation of the efficacy and ethics of such cultural 'appropriation.'[2]

The form of cross-cultural currents in the theatre, known as interculturalism, though often regarded as an aesthetic practice, is political charged for it involves the 'recycling' (and re-presentation) of cultures foreign to one's own. It is thus a discourse laden with questions, controversies, interrogations, deliberations and contestations. Although, as explained, such cultural exchange and adaptation is not a revolutionary theatrical practice, a contemporary interculturalism on the stage, one marked by, and engendered from, the avant-gardism of the twentieth century, has yet, as semiologist Patrice Pavis articulates, found its own identity despite being evidently popularised since the early 1980s. This absent distinction,

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[1] For a more informative survey of early (and contemporary) 'intercultural' practice, see Erika Fischer-Lichte, "Interculturalism in Contemporary Theatre" in *The Intercultural Performance Reader*.
[2] The term 'appropriation' will be explained in greater detail in the later sections of this chapter.

indeterminacy and amorphous identity results in contemporary cultural criticism viewing intercultural performance as a (performative) medium that interpellates, with epistemic force, issues of identity, cultural appropriation, misrepresentation, Orientalism, and (neo)imperialism. The currency of the intercultural topography is, evidently, one that is highly charged. Cultural and performance criticism have accused Western interculturalists of exploiting, essentialising and misappropriating indigenous practices especially those belonging to Asian cultures and traditions. Western First-World interculturalism is regarded by them as a neo-imperialistic venture masked as artistic licence to re-invent, and pardoned by the inexorable influence of globalisation and internationalisation that has led to transcultural practices and dissolutions of cultural and geo-political boundaries. Interculturalism is, distinctly, one of the most controversial theatrical practices of the twentieth century and a continuation of an Orientalist trope.

In the light of this controversy in cultural politics and representation intrinsic to intercultural performance, this thesis seeks to contribute to existing critical discourses by examining the developments and dimensions of interculturalism that have since seen transformation and changes in political trajectories. Globalisation, facilitated not only by modern forms of transportation and communication but particularly by new media forms, have since impacted how intercultural theatre, as a form of cross-cultural 'hybrid' aesthetic, has been regarded. The currents of exchange and negotiation have seen momentous shifts between cultural polarities. Source and target cultures[3] have also reversed with the increasing prevalence of notable Asian directors such as Wu Hsing-Kuo (吴兴国) (Taiwan), Yukio Ninagawa (蜷川幸雄) (Japan), Lin Zhaohua (林兆華) (China) and Ong Keng Sen (王景生) (Singapore) whose works have excavated Western performance practices as well as mythologies to re-present an 'Asian' interculturalism. These trends mark a need to reconsider existing definitions of the intercultural as it takes into account the changing dynamics of cross-cultural exchange.

Culture & Cultural-isms in Performance

To competently discuss any aspect of the intercultural, it is beneficial to first explore the many 'cultural-isms' that have been used interchangeably to describe performances that employ elements foreign to one's own. Such an attempt would require first a comprehension of the term 'culture.' While social anthropologists, historians and cultural ethnographers have long

[3] The terms 'source' and 'target' are used by Patrice Pavis to explain the logic of intercultural exchange. These terms will be explained in greater detail in the subsequent pages of this chapter.

queried the epistemological sense of cultural frontiers and the ontological nature of culture, either as part of a social imagining or material practices (behavioural patterns, language), Clifford Geertz's influential work, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, has become the accepted authority of a definition of culture amongst others. Geertz, basing his views on earlier anthropologists, such as Clyde Kluckhohn, and sociologist Max Weber to name a few, defines culture as "a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which people communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life" (89). Culture is consequently an intricate "web of significance" (5) for it is essentially a semiotic system (ibid.). Symbols and signs (hence a cultural semiotics) in societies play a dominant role in demarcating and distinguishing culture. The culture of a people is an ensemble of texts, themselves ensembles (Geertz 452). In other words, culture is

> a system of symbols thanks to which human beings confer a meaning on their own experience. Systems of symbols, created by people, shared, conventional, ordered and obviously learned, furnish them with an intelligible setting for orienting themselves in relation to others or in relation to a living work and to themselves (Geertz 130).

Because culture is a closed system of signification open only to those who are marked (either ethnically, religiously, or voluntarily), access to and comprehending cultures, as Geertz recognises in the final chapter "Notes on the Balinese Cockfight," is an objectively impossible task for there are significant methodological pitfalls in ethnographising what can be a complex social system of order understood only by those who partake of that system. Furthermore, culture is dynamic, variable and shifting. Anthropology is, conversely, inscriptive, descriptive and prescriptive. To speak of or describe culture objectively, as anthropology as an established discipline seeks to do, is to contain what is conceivably a mutable 'concept.'

In an attempt to relate culture to performance and theatre, theatre semiologist Patrice Pavis, in *Theatre at the Crossroads of Culture* and subsequently *The Intercultural Performance Studies Reader*, provides alternative considerations of defining culture thereby further exemplifying the complexity of expostulating such a concept. Citing Camile Camilleri, Pavis shows how culture is "a kind of shaping, of specific 'inflections' which mark our representations, feelings, activity – in short [...] every aspect of our mental life and even of our biological organism under the influence of the group" (Camilleri 16). This is reflected on the stage as seen by the codifications of the performing body. Theatrical performance thus corporealises and makes visible the inscription of culture (Pavis, *Intercultural Reader* 3). Another definition of the cultural order raised by Pavis is one that is in opposition to the natural order. The body of the actor becomes a sign and "the user of a culture indicates how it

functions by revealing its codification and convention (ibid.). Culture can thus also be considered as an 'interiorisation' of practices transmitted and transferred from one generation to the next (Camilleri 16-17). On the stage, these interiorisations are revealed as an implicit system of techniques, experiences, citations, an ensemble of rules of behaviour and habits of acting (Pavis, *Intercultural Reader* 4)

While it is agreeable that culture, regarded loosely, is a set of practices and belief systems belonging to a particularised group of people, a notion of cultural purity is perhaps a misnomer since the history of human civilisation has been one of cross-cultural influences and trans-border practices both economic and social in nature. The concept of a geographical border is also as much imaginary as it is political. Concepts of nationality, nation and nationhood are, as Benedict Anderson has acutely observed, merely imaginary. The definition of a nation is an imagined political community and it is imagined as both limited and sovereign (6-7). Any attachment of culture to nation and nationality is thus as ill-defined as the geo-political strategies that conceptualise a (national) community. As Richard Schechner observes, there are "overlays, borrowings, and mutual influencings [that make] every culture a conglomerate, a hybrid, a palimpsest" ("Intercultural Themes" 151). Culture, as a concept, is inconsistent, alterable, variable and dynamic. The consistently transformative nature of culture makes for an impossible task in any authoritative inscription and definitive prescription. This intrinsic attribute of culture further complicates any discussion of cross-cultural or intercultural practices for what results seems merely a vain attempt of tautology and false causes.

Despite this fluidity, a concept of culture is necessary even if it borders on the imaginary and the real, of what is practised and what is thought of about the practice of culture. While it is agreeable that no culture is pure and no culture is itself without being a hybrid or palimpsest (ibid.), to deny cultural differences or regard margins as absent, in a call for a universal humanism, is erroneous. The thesis thus recognises, with a self-reflexive gaze, that a discussion of culture as monolithic and immutable is erroneous and seeks instead to consider cultures as a collective of signifiers (in particular musical and acoustic ones).

From this survey of the definitions of culture, it follows logically that the diversity of cross-cultural transactions in performance today needs to be cartographised. The intercultural, cross-cultural, and multicultural, have become terms often employed freely and synonymously by both theatre practitioners and academics in their quest to interrogate and comprehend performances that involve cultural interaction, interrelation, or adaptation. Yet a distinction between these terms must be made for they reveal varying performance strategies as well as political intentions. While it is not the intention of this thesis to dictate and designate various

forms of cross-cultural theatre particularly since there is no stable site by which the discourse has been established, and the existing contestations within about the delineations and boundaries of cross-cultural theatrical practices still prevail, an attempt to note the (possibly indefinite) differences, with the knowledge that these convenient classifications remain contentious and the filters by which they are defined are porous, would prove useful. Identifying the overlaps, intersections, and convergences between these forms of theatrical practices would help locate intercultural performance practice within a larger discourse of cross-cultural theatre and denote, consequently, its divergent genesis despite the recognition that any attempt to locate interculturalism with precision might prove contentious and controversial.

Patrice Pavis's *The Intercultural Performance Reader* (1996) provides perhaps the most comprehensive collection of definitions, viewpoints and perspectives. It offers expeditionary definitions on various forms of cultural-*isms* in performance while claiming authority in differentiating these at times identical nodes. Jacqueline Lo and Helen Gilbert's "Towards a Topography of Cross-Cultural Theatre Praxis" (2002) builds on existing theorisations of cross-culturalisms and Pavis's work, and seeks to further demarcate the boundaries with greater clarity. This article also remains the most recent work on defining the cross-cultural terrain in performance. Performances that involve exchanges and movements of cultures at the levels of narrative, performance aesthetics, production processes and reception by an interpretive community can, in all generality, be termed "Cross-Cultural" (Lo and Gilbert, "Topography" 31). The currents by which such cross-cultural traffic flows can be considered broadly as "Multicultural theatre," "Postcolonial Theatre" and "Intercultural theatre."[4] While this thesis will not explicate in great detail the functional definitions Lo and Gilbert provide, it will, using designations provided, distinguish multiculturalism and interculturalism, specifically, with regard to stage performance for the thesis seeks to examine the practice of intercultural theatre with greater clarity and interrogate existing performative notions of interculturalism and intercultural locations.

"Multiculturalism" and "multicultural" carry, according to Lo and Gilbert, site-specific meanings and is oftentimes a politicised term and a political strategy in official national policies that encourage harmonious co-existence in the populace and racially non-biased practices that promote egalitarianism. It is a strategy that signals a "commitment to cultural pluralism [and] gives the appearance of diversity without necessarily confronting the hegemony of the dominant culture" ("Topography" 33). Multicultural theatre can also seek to

[4] For a thorough examination on the differences of these forms of Cross-Cultural Theatre, see Jacqueline Lo and Helen Gilbert, "Toward a Topography of Cross-Cultural Theatre Praxis," *The Drama Review* 46:3 (2002): 31-53.

promote cultural diversity while situating itself within the symbolic space of the national narrative (ibid. 34). Ghetto theatre, migrant theatre and community theatre are some examples of multicultural theatre. Essentially, multicultural theatre employs the plurality and multiplicity of cultures in a national community and highlights the richness of cultural difference in performance without necessarily privileging one culture over another.

Lo and Gilbert's definition of "multicultural theatre" echoes Pavis's notion since he, likewise, believes that such performances that employ multiple languages, and performed for a multicultural audience, is only possible when the political system in place recognises the existence of diverse cultural communities and further encourages their cooperation (*Intercultural Reader* 8). Meaning thus results from a collision of contexts and not the coexistence or multiplicity of cultural sources (ibid.).

Another form of cross-cultural theatre Lo and Gilbert denote is postcolonial theatre. Postcolonial theatre has always concerned itself with works that function as sites of political resistance specifically that of race / ethnicity, gender and social class. The prefix 'post' gestures to theatre that was birthed as reaction to, and consequence of, a colonial history. It thus characterises much of theatre in the former European colonies. At times, postcolonial theatre is also identity theatre for it is in the act of resistance to the colonial overlord that postcolonial theatre seeks to create and empower a (new) national identity. Postcolonial theatre is as such "a geopolitical category designating both a historical and a discursive relation to imperialism, whether that phenomenon is treated as critically or ambivalently" (Lo and Gilbert, "Topography" 35). Pavis considers postcolonial theatre as one that takes up elements of the 'home' culture and uses them indigenously thereby resulting in a blend, or potlatch, of languages, dramaturgical forms and performance processes (*Intercultural Reader* 10).

If multicultural theatre is theatre consequent of nationalistic instincts and a deliberate politico-cultural strategy – a "framework premised on ideals of citizenship and the management of cultural / ethnic difference (Lo and Gilbert, "Topography" 36) – and postcolonial theatre is designated by its act of dialectical resistance to the dominant discourse consequent of an imperialistic past, intercultural theatre is at once both and neither. In its broadest understanding, interculturalism is characterised by "a sharing and mutual borrowing of the manifestation of one theatre practice by another" (Singleton, "Interculturalism" 628). It can also be considered an avant-garde performance mode / style that amalgamates varying cultural performance practices or cultural beliefs and attitudes while seeking some form of hybridisation at the performative and aesthetic levels. Interculturalism could then be seen as performance "at the precise intersection of two cultures and the two theatrical forms, and which is therefore a separate and complete creation" (Pavis, *Intercultural Reader* 4). It is as

much an "inexhaustible collage of languages" (Pavis, *Crossroads* 1) as it is "the dialectic of exchanges of civilities between cultures" (ibid. 2). There is thus the evident element of 'multiculturalism' involved in intercultural theatre practice. Interculturalism can also be located within the postcolonial framework for it is oftentimes regarded as syncretic form derived from an intentional Western sampling and mediation of Other cultures and performing traditions. It is therefore, ironically, considered an Occidental theatre that attempts to perform its postcoloniality by advocating 'universals' in all performance forms – ritual, dance, music, theatre – from any and every human culture.[5]

Searching Interculturalism:

A Trajectory of Interstices, Intersections & Interactions

Recognising the changing trajectories that intercultural theatre has experienced since the turn of the century, a brief explication of the development of inter-cultural interactions on the stage is necessary. This historical development can be explicated as two approaches though admittedly both are intimately intertwined with one paradigm impacting the other in a reciprocal cycle: interculturalism as aesthetic practice and theories of the intercultural. While, irrefutably, the super-structure of intercultural theatrical aesthetics is, and should be, informed and influenced by a theoretical base, the practices can often remain indifferent and possibly dislocated from theoretical knowledge. A survey of the development of these interrelated trajectories would assist in comprehending current changes and transformations of the intercultural that are the subject of the consequent chapters in this thesis.

First introduced by Richard Schechner in *The Drama Review* (1982), interculturalism, as a performative concept, was a genuine attempt at a celebration and comprehension of cultural syncretism and new performance possibilities granted by an amalgamation of cultural forms. Recognising that cultural borrowing is a priori a human activity instinctual to the species, Schechner's impassionate appeal for a return to the intercultural as a fundamental practice of human interaction is a call for a return to a traditional practice and reinstatement of "traditional, even ancient, values" ("Intercultural Performance" 4). Performance is the very means by which cultural exchange and syncretism can take place to facilitate an understanding among peoples and cultures. Underlying this aesthetic vision is Schechner's belief that universal structures of performance exist and they can be located in, and extracted from, the

[5] The works and writings of Richard Schechner, developing concepts of universals in performance advocated by anthropologist Victor Turner, best exemplify this belief in universality. See "Magnitudes of Performance" in *By Means of Performance: Intercultural Studies of Theatre and Ritual*, 19-49.

various (social) rituals of diverse cultures. Interculturalism, to Schechner, is a movement to be celebrated for "the more we [...] can perform our own and other peoples' cultures the better" (ibid.).

Schechner's belief in a global cultural utopia effected through the understanding and practice of 'essential' performance universals is distinctly a continuation of early European Orientalism practised in the age of colonialism. Although Orientalism in the late twentieth century, due to Edward Said's influemtial work *Orientalism* (1978), has come to commonly mean a negative Western enterprise of an epistemological misrepresentation of the East, the term finds its origin in British colonial policy in India as the methods and concepts of maintaining and preserving social relations with the indigenous population. Orientalism thus began as a political attitude and policy but evolved in the early nineteenth century to describe a genre of art that was pioneered by the French and developed by British painters who painted subjects and objects Middle Eastern and African in origin. Architects and designers were equally fascinated by the exotic East.. They adopted philosophies, ideas and concepts, often Islamic but also Indian, Chinese and Japanese, to be used in their work.[6]

In the field of performance, the presentation of the Oriental Other has always been a common practice particularly in the twentieth century. The importation and sanitisation of other cultures brought back to Europe was practised by W.B. Yeats and Antonin Artaud. The former looked to classical Noh performance styles of Japan for a re-invention of a new indigenous Irish theatre while the latter was inspired by Balinese dance forms and Cambodian dancing which he saw as a means to reinvigorate the future of European theatre (Singleton, "Interculturalism" 628). Interculturalism is thus distinctly engendered from Orientalism; Schechner's works reify this long-held Eurocentric philosophy and interculturalism is the "predictable, even inevitable, outcome of the avant-garde" (Schechner, "Intercultural Themes" 155).

Since Yeats and Artaud, there have been several more expeditions to the traditional past of the Orient Other in the search for forms, philosophies, concepts, ideas and inspiration. European post-war directors confounded yet inspired by the frenzy of postmodernism looked to the past, to ritual, and to the East for a renewal and a 'transformance'[7] – a portmanteau of transformation and performance advocated by Schechner – of Western orthodox dramaturgy. Perhaps the most notable and critiqued performance that exemplifies Schechner's conviction

[6] For a more comprehensive survey of the origins of Orientalism in the arts, see John M. MacKenzie, *Orientalism: History, Theory and the Arts*.

[7] This is a term formulated by Schechner to describe the efficacious and transformative potential of theatre and performance. In demonstrating the intricate and dynamic braiding between ritual and theatre, Schechner attempts to prove how theatre, like ritual, could be as effectual and transformational as it is entertaining: they are not opposed but form poles of a continuum. See *Performance Theory* 120.

of performance universals and 'transformance' is Peter Brook's *The Mahabharata* (1985). Premiered at the 1985 Avignon Festival and subsequently having made its way to the Bouffes du Nord, the Majestic Theatre in Brooklyn, New York and thereafter turned into a film (1989), Brook's production, adapted for the stage by Jean-Claude Carrière, took India's Sanskrit epic of "kings and princes, sages and wise men, demons and god,"[8] and of Brahamanic lore, and casted it on the Western stage. Employing a multi-ethnic and multi-national cast, diverse accents, musicalities, and a diversity of representational modes, Brook reduced a religious text of 90,000 stanzas to a nine-hour production that became a vehicle for propagating his belief in "a syncretic cultural universe, where all the stage is the world" (Dasgupta, "*Mahabharata*" 76). Likewise, Ariane Mnouchkine's extensive use of Asian performance traditions, as seen in her employment of elements of Japanese Kabuki in *Richard II, Twelfth Night and Henry IV*, and Bunraku in *Tambours Sur La Digue*, exemplify the Western belief in utopian universals. By looking to the East for a means to rethink (and reject) naturalist modes in Western theatre, Mnouchkine created visually spectacular mise en scènes which became her intercultural trademark. Asian traditional performance practices allowed a revelation of the sacred and ritualistic, modes in which Western performance styles were unable to. Asian theatre, as Mnouchkine believed, could renew Western theatre because of its rupture with naturalism and its highly symbolic and metaphorical presence. For her, "the very origin of theatrical form is here [Asian theatre]" (Pavis, *Intercultural Reader* 97).

Observing the patterns and processes of Western intercultural theatre, such as the works by Brook and Mnouchkine, theatre semiologist Patrice Pavis formulated a theory of the currents of intercultural exchange in *Theatre at the Crossroads of Culture* (1992). Examining the 'crossroads' of cultures in contemporary theatre practice where "foreign cultures, unfamiliar discourses and the myriad artistic effects of estrangement are jumbled together" (*Crossroads* 1), Pavis advances a semiotic model of the ways in which the intercultural mise en scène transmits a foreign culture to the public. Returning to semiology as the vanguard discipline for the analysis of performance texts, Pavis believes that such a model of interculturalism can help a "'genuine' audience understand the meaning of the production (and the production of meaning)" (ibid. 3). The hourglass model, "ready for everything" (ibid. 4), thus proposes a source culture and target culture located figuratively at opposing ends on an hourglass with grains of exchange slipping down the narrow neck from the upper bowl (source) to the lower (target):

> In the upper bowl is the foreign culture, the source culture, which is more or less codified and solidified in diverse anthropological, sociocultural or

[8] This is the common description of the story of *Mahabharata*.

> artistic modelisations [...] this culture must pass through a narrow neck. If the grains of culture or their conglomerate are sufficiently fine, they will flow through without any trouble, however slowly, into the lower bowl, that of the target culture [...] The grains will rearrange themselves in a way which appears random, but which is partly regulated by their passage through some dozen filters put in place by the target culture and the observer (*Crossroads* 4).

Pavis believed that intercultural exchange on the stage could be explained by these transferences from what is a source culture, "a culture foreign to us (Westerners)" (ibid. 7) to a target culture, "Western culture" (ibid.), thereby enriching the spectacle, experience and meaning of the latter.

Neither Pavis's theoretical explanations nor the aesthetic creations of Brook and Mnouchkine have, in the light of postcolonial criticism and cultural theory, been well received. Far from the humanist and utopian optimism propounded, reception to Brook's *The Mahabharata* was critical with the performance charged with allegations of an ethnocentric interculturalism bred from the histories of Orientalism. The production became one of the most widely criticised exemplars of cultural appropriation that exoticised, essentialised and disregarded the historicities, religious, and cultural specificities and contexts of indigenous forms and Indic themes. In the field of intercultural performance, it became the example par excellence of Said's theories of Orientalism.

For Said the study of the Orient was far removed from a genuine comprehension and representation of the East. Orientalism, first located in academic discourses, is instead the study of the 'exotic' East that involves a Western construction of (imagined) representations of the racial-cultural Other. The phenomenon of Orientalism, as Said regarded it, was not a "correspondence between Orientalism and Orient, but with the internal consistency of Orientalism and its ideas about the Orient (the East as career) despite or beyond any correspondence, or lack thereof, with a 'real' Orient (5). These re-imaginings and re-presentations, as disseminated discourses, reinforce the imperialistic dominance and cultural supremacy of the West as it further generates mythic stereotypes rather than, as Western colonialists erroneously believe, encourage an authentic understanding of indigenous peoples. Orientalism, as Said propounds, was

> the distillation of essential ideas about the Orient – its sensuality, its tendency to despotism, its aberrant mentality, its habits of inaccuracy, its backwardness – into a separate and unchallenged coherence (205).

The Orient, beginning with nineteenth century scholarship, was used to demarcate what was not Occidental and consequently generated a discourse of Occidentalism. It was that which was not identified with mainstream European progress, was degenerate, eccentric, feminine, uncivilised, retarded, and required "attention, reconstruction, even redemption" from the West (Said 206); the Orient was located as absolute difference. It was cast as an inferior Other and as absence in the face of Western presence. As discourse, Orientalism became a systematic discipline of accumulation (Said 123); it was "a political doctrine willed over the Orient because the Orient was weaker than the West, which elided the Orient's difference with its weakness [...] As a cultural apparatus Orientalism is all aggression, activity, judgment, will-to-truth, and knowledge" (204).

Brook's *The Mahabharata* demonstrated these Orientalist tendencies through its performance of an imagined India and an Indian imaginary. The production proved the ways in which the Orient existed for the West as a 'performance' aggressively simplified and re-invented for a white audience. Gautam Dasgupta, in "*The Mahabharata*: Peter Brook's Orientalism," critiques Brook's cultural myopia and performance imperialism by evidencing his failure to comprehend the deeply religious context of the epic poem. Brook's *Bhagavad-Gita* sequence was, for example, "shockingly truncated" (Marranca and Dasgupta 78). The importance of this sequence cannot be underscored for it is the epicentre of the poem and the fulcrum on which rests the entire thrust of this monumental drama of humanity (ibid.). Brook (and Carrière) clearly lacked a deep understanding of the text and pillaged a sacred Hindu text for mere artistic inspiration. As Dasgupta reminds us, "there is no dramatic or epic kernel to *The Mahabharata* outside of its theological value system" (ibid. 79). Rustom Bharucha's fiercely critical assessment of Brook's production shares similar views with Dasgupta for he notes how this religious text was performed without context, consideration or understanding of the Indian epic. *The Mahabharata* was decontextualised from its history in order to sell it to audiences in the West (*World* 69) – it was not a genuine attempt at comprehending or representing the Indian Other but a theatre staged in and for the Western self. In attempting to stage a story fifteen times longer than the Bible in nine hours, Brook reduced the symbolic significance of the text to a performative moment, a story told for the Western audience in modes best understood by them. It had not "absorbed some of the fundamental principles underlying traditional narratives in India" (ibid. 74). For Bharucha, the production exemplified a specific kind of theatrical representation that negated the non-Western context of its borrowing (ibid. 70) – a charge clearly synonymous with Orientalism for it is therein that the Other is assumed to be mute and needs to be spoken for. Brook's presentation of a linear

narrative contradicted the very fundamental cyclicity of time pervasive in the *Mahabharata*

revealing the foreignness of appropriation and an Orientalist attitude to the foreign-Other. While Schechner, in an interview with Brook, believed this to be model exemplar of interculturalism due to the curious music that exemplified the cultural layerings,[9] Bharucha regarded this project as seriously Eurocentric, "where the cultures of the world can be subsumed within his (Brook's) European structure and framework of values" (ibid. 81).[10]

While Mnouchkine's intercultural strategies differ from Brook's in that she avoids the politicised terrain of adapting religious and culturally specific texts, and effects a collaboration of forms and styles as a re-invention of theatre, her works have not escaped charges of Orientalist misappropriations. Her formalist hybrid experiments have come under criticism for exoticising the Orient and imagining its mysterious and 'enigmatic' qualities, "a product of her own cultural tourism throughout Asia" (Singleton, "Presidential Address" 11). Bharucha berates Mnouchkine's excessive romanticisation of Asian theatre forms when he asserts how "sensuality cannot be transported or 'restored' through the use of raw materials from 'other cultures" (*Theatre* 244). Any such attempt would be contrivance and it would embody the worst indulgences of Orientalism (ibid.). The sense of Otherness, as Singleton observes of Mnouchkine's early works, was "filtered through a plastic formalism" (Singleton, "Presidential Address" 12). Like Brook, this interculturality served little to understand the Other and went so far only as a pursuit of the Self (ibid.).[11]

Perhaps the strongest criticisms laid against a Western conceptualisation of interculturalism are those against Schechner whom Bharucha believes to have formalised the inequities of exchange. Writing from a position within the appropriated culture, Bharucha acutely disparages Schechner's faith in universals. The latter's belief in applying theoretical models stemmed from the isolation of ritual structures and processes of a particularised social context and the application of it to another seems misplaced for in so doing there is only presumption, representation and placement of the Other within Schechner's own "'map' of post-modern performance" (Bharucha, *Theatre* 28). In the study and application of ritual, Bharucha claims, Schechner neutralises the context of the ritual by concentrating on the physical action and uses 'other' cultures in purely arbitrary fashions (ibid. 32-33):

> Underlying Schechner's advocacy of the use of rituals in theatre is a specific attitude toward difference between cultures [...] Ultimately, he [Schechner]

[9] See Richard Schechner, "Talking with Peter Brook," *The Drama Review* 30:1 (1986), 55.
[10] For Bharucha's complete critique of Peter Brook's *Mahabharata*, see Chap 4, "Peter Brook's *Mahabharata*: A View from India," in *Theatre and the World: Performance and the Politics of Culture*.
[11] The terms Self and Other are commonly used in discourses of identity politics and psychoanalysis. It is theorised best by Emmanuel Levinas of whose theories will be discussed in greater detail in the following pages.

> use[s] the supposed lack of differences between cultures as a rationale for interpreting rituals in a personal way (ibid. 34).

Developing Slavoj Žižek's critique of multiculturalism and distinguishing it epistemologically from interculturalism while demonstrating how both concepts are often regarded as transposable synonyms, Bharucha continues his aggressive critique of the interculturalist in *The Politics of Cultural Practice*. Žižek, in a subversive article written for the *New Left Review* (1997), exposes multiculturalism as "self-referential form of racism, a 'racism with a distance'" (44) for multicultural practice breeds the false belief of conceiving the Other as a "self-enclosed 'authentic' community towards which he, the multiculturalist, maintains a distance rendered by his privileged universal position" (ibid.). In many ways, the multiculturalist and the interculturalist hold common positions of power and superiority over the Other. Multiculturalism, as Žižek propounds, is racism in disguise. Interculturalism, however,

> erases all distinctions through an assumption of a shared universality. In the empty space of the intercultural meeting ground, which assumes the 'point zero' of an authentic 'first contact' between 'essential human beings,' there is a total erasure of the participants' ethnicities in favour of their universal human identities, creativities, and potentialities. The interculturalist is above ethnicity [...], cast in an invariably white, patriarchal, heterosexist image (Bharucha, *Politics* 44).

The naïve belief in an innate human 'universality' propounded by the interculturalist posits interculturalism as a (theatrical) practice that has far greater adverse implications for it, in Bharucha's view, will always be cast in a performance of an erasure and re-formation of minority cultures. Unlike multiculturalism which recognises the (ethnic) Other as inferior and subservient, the interculturalist does not, and will not, accord an Other with being and identity. Any performance of interculturalism European in origin is therefore always already subject to existing Orientalist discourses – a removal and refiguring of the Other by white Western interculturalists. The syncretism on the stage can only remain an illusion of eurocentric universalist tendencies and Orientalist (mis)perceptions. Western interculturalism becomes a performance of absent Others seen through the eyes of what remains thoroughly familiar and recognisable.

The resurrected impulse of looking to the East and peering back on one's cultural past, as a means of aesthetic reinvention, was distinctly a continuation of the Orientalist trope as much as it stemmed from a modernist anxiety of exhaustion, depletion, emptiness, and need for nostalgia. It was an ennui that was characteristic of post World-War II Western

consciousness and an existentialism that permeated Western society and thought. Such an aesthetic motivation has its roots in a deeper "ennui, a reaction to aridity and the subsequent search for new sources of energy, vitality and sensuality through the importation of 'rejuvenating raw materials'" ("View from India" 207). Western interculturalism, as a search for renewal and reinvigoration, can thus be said to have continued the scholarly practice of Said's Orientalism.[12] As Bharucha poignantly points out "interculturalism can be liberating, but it can also be a continuation of colonialism, a further exploitation of other cultures" (*Theatre* 14).

In the area of intercultural theory, Pavis's hourglass model seemingly explains, satisfactorily, the currents of exchange prevalent in a European brand of interculturalism that performs the West-East or North-South exchange.[13] It fails however to accurately theorise intercultural performances of differing (non-Western) natures. In addition, Pavis's hourglass model has thus since been heavily critiqued about its naïve conception and myopic understanding of interculturalism and the state of cultural practice for it subscribes to the dominant Orientalist discourses of describing the intersections of cultural contact. The model assumes a one-way cultural flow based on a hierarchy of access and importance. There must exist a source culture from which the target culture needs absorb. Its unidirectionality, Rustom Bharucha argues, contradicts the larger modalities of exchange (*Theatre* 241); it does not account for the complex dynamics and flows in performances that involve more than a binary source-target transfer. In Singaporean Ong Keng Sen's intercultural Shakespeare performances *Lear* (1997), *Desdemona* (2000), and *Search Hamlet* (2002), the cross-cultural modalities were numerous and expansive. They were performances not merely of an exchange between source and target cultures. Ong employed a variety of Asian performance practices in rhizomal interaction on the stage confounding and disrupting any notion of source and target.[14] Ong's productions have also challenged Pavis's hourglass theorisations for inherent in Pavis's model is the assumption that a single language is spoken or that there is a process of translation in the

[12] John MacKenzie provides a comprehensive historical survey of Orientalism in Theatre with a particularly useful section on twentieth century theatre and Interculturalism. *See Orientalism: History, Theory and the Arts*, 176-207.

[13] Lo and Gilbert employs the term Extratextual Theatre to refer to such forms of intercultural performances that appropriate non-Western art forms to rejuvenate Western art.

[14] The concept of the 'rhizome' was first explained by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. In *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1987), Deleuze and Guattari describe the rhizome as that which "connects any point to any other point, and its traits are not necessarily linked to traits of the same nature; it brings into play very different regimes of signs, and even nonsign states [...] Unlike the graphic arts, drawing or photography, unlike tracings, the rhizome pertains to a map that must be produced, constructed, a map that is always detachable, connectable, reversible, modifiable, and has multiple entranceways and exits and its own lines of flight (21). The model of the rhizome was Deleuze and Guattari's call to explain describe theories beyond a simplistic unidirectional cause and effect binaries (also known as arborescence). The rhizomal model of knowledge permits multiple, non-hierarchical entry and exit points of interpretation and theorisation.

through-flow of cultural grains from source to target. A logocentric monolingualism pervades Pavis's theories of interculturalism yet one of the key defining features of more contemporary intercultural productions, such as Ong's, employ a plethora of Asian languages (both linguistic and performative) that further ruptures any distinct flow from a particularised source to a determinate target. Multilingualism then, or one could term inter-lingualism, is the new phenomenon in contemporary intercultural theatre.

The flow from source to target also gestures at concepts of power relations. When overlaid with performance examples of the extracultural kind, cultural imperialism on the stage seems an inevitable spectacle. Although Pavis anticipates this charge by claiming that the hourglass can be turned upside-down "as soon as the users of a foreign culture ask themselves how they can communicate with their own culture to another target culture" (*Crossroads* 5), it still reinforces a 'one-way street' in which the sources of 'other' cultures are reduced to materials used strategically by 'receptor-adapters' of the target culture for their specific purposes (Bharucha, *World* 242). For Bharucha, the hourglass model echoes Western positions on interculturalism. Like the intercultural theatre practices of Brook and Mnouchkine, Pavis's theory is "entirely circumscribed by the priorities and codes of his (Pavis's) own culture" (ibid. 241).

Ultimately, Pavis's hourglass interculturalism does not stand the test of time in a turn of the millennium world of globalisation and the permeability of cultures or political systems that are accessed differentially for different communities of people ("Topography" 42). It also does not account for the heterogeneity and heteronomy that is inherent in intercultural performance, or of any cultural interaction. Interculturalism is a process of political negotiation but the hourglass disregards this imperative aspect since it uses mise en scène as *réglage* that mediates different contexts, cultural backgrounds and traditions (Lo and Gilbert, "Topography" 43). In the process of filtering, there is an eradication of cultural positions and an assimilation of the source by the target. Pavis's flawed model, though possibly useful as an aesthetic theory, resonates with accusations of cultural imperialism. The model's unidirectionality of cultural movement advocates an unequal exchange the does not promote an intercultural traffic (Bharucha, *Theatre and the World* 242). Lo and Gilbert note how "intercultural exchange according to the hourglass model is a reductive process which distils cultural difference into essences that can be readily absorbed by the target culture ("Topography" 43). It is a hegemonic theory for it re-scribes the subjugation of alternatives and diversity.

Interculturalism, as a European aesthetic discourse, is little more than the continued practice of Orientalist hegemonies. As postmodern theatrical ritual it seeks, as Jean-Francois Lyotard describes, to rescribe a *grand récit* by subsuming and absorbing all *petits récit*.[15] Interculturalism is however not merely an aesthetic product or a form of theatrical practice; it denotes, as Bonnie Marranca observes, a mental attitude that precedes performance, the performance process, and the theoretical writing that accompanies performance (11). Such a designation highlights the responsibility of those who practice and perform these cultural interstices for it necessitates an ethics of (re)presenting (metamorphosing, negating, erasing) the subjectivity of the Other on the stage. The controversy, and debate, arising from intercultural practice is located in an ethics of representation and a politics of appropriation. Any discussion of the intercultural thus necessarily and always already necessitates a discursive interrogation and cross-examination of cultural politics. As Bharucha accurately notes, in his seminal work *Theatre and the World*, a dialogic of the intercultural must stem from an engagement with one's own cultural investment and locale (240). This inevitably and most evidently sets up a dialectic of Self and Other, I / You. Such a dialectic becomes further complicated when it is not merely two cultures in inter-play but multiple ones. There is an intensity of an encounter with Otherness not merely located geographically or linguistically but a radical alterity confronted in the cultural body (as ethnic and racial Other) and the body politic of a cultural other. Interculturalism is consequently always an engagement with the Other's cultural practice, codes, beliefs, behaviours, language and *presence / being*. Teleologically, this encounter can take the form of a culture's historical past that is now, in the face of the present-I, become Other.[16]

An encounter and engagement with an Other(ness) engenders an ethical discourse. In *Totality and Infinity*, Emmanuel Levinas writes of a lived experience of an encounter with an Other and the meaning of consequent intersubjective relations. Jacques Derrida, in "Violence and Metaphysics: An Essay on the Thought of Emmanuel Levinas," points out that Levinas writes of an "ethics of ethics." (*Writing and Difference* 111). This ethics of ethics is a discourse that explores the responsibilities of I in its encounter with the Other. It is an ethics prior to ontology and subsequently a recognition of the absolute alterity of the Other. Levinas's ethics is a rejection of a totality of Being that Western philosophical ideas, propounded by Heidegger

[15] For an explanation of these terms, see Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*.

[16] Such a form of Intercultural Theatre is known as Intra-Cultural Theatre. Intracultural practices seek pre-modern traditions and histories which are subsequently used as material for a transformation of its own culture. See Pavis, *The Intercultural Performance Reader*, 5-6. Intracultural Theatre can also denote theatrical practices that engage cultural practices of specific communities or regions within a nation state. See Rustom Bharucha, *Theatre and the World*, 240 – 250.

and Husserl, have thus far prized. He believes that the Other cannot and should not be reduced to the same and hence rejects ontology for it is regarded as a discourse that dissolves the distinctions between 'I' and 'You'. As Levinas notes, "Western philosophy has most often been an ontology: a reduction of the Other to the Same by interposition of a middle and neutral terms that ensures the comprehension of being" (*Totality* 33-34). Levinas's ethics of ethics thus involves

> a separation of that I that is not the reciprocal of the transcendence of the other with regard to me [...] It imposes itself upon meditation in the name of a concrete moral experience [...] This moral experience, so commonplace, indicates a metaphysical asymmetry: the radical impossibility of seeing oneself from the outside and of speaking in the same sense of oneself and of the others, and consequently the impossibility of totalisation (ibid. 53).

First philosophy must lie prior to Being and ontology as the study of being. Being needs to be redefined as the infinity of the self and other for Otherness should be exterior to Being. This first philosophy is located therefore in the responsibility that arises in a dialogic sociality. It is in the immediacy of a face-to-face encounter, an encounter with the face of the Other (*le visage d'Autrui*), that I discovers its own particularity and singularity.

By 'Other,' Levinas means an 'other' person or an other than oneself although he never does quite specify with certainty what this 'Other' is and regards it as "a movement going forth from a world that is familiar to us [...] toward an alien outside of oneself, toward a younger [...] the elsewhere of the other" (*Totality* 33). Considered otherwise, his Other is also the other of the us that we encounter in the traces of everyday experience. The 'I,' on the other hand, is that which is primal and original for

> To be I is, over and beyond any individuation that can be derived from a system of references, to have identity as one's content. The I is not a being that always remains the same, but is the being whose existing consists in identifying itself, in recovering its identity throughout all that happens to it. It is the primal identity, the primordial work of identification (Levinas, *Totality* 36).

Beyond an understanding of 'Other' and 'I,' the relational identities of both form the fundamental concerns that Levinas wishes to explore in order to establish new ethical relations that reject ontological definitions. The Other needs to be regarded as absolute alterity and not one that is relative to 'I'. In so doing, 'I' recovers a sense of identity as well – in relating to the alterity of the Other. As Levinas expounds,

> [t]he alterity, the radical heterogeneity of the other, is possible only if the other is other with respect to a term whose essence is to remain at the point of departure, to serve as entry into the relation, to be the same not relatively but absolutely (*Totality* 36).

The 'Self' does not, as such, exist a priori to the encounter with the other and the traumatic experience of alterity cannot as such be avoided. Engaging alterity engenders an identification of the 'Self'. The encounter is then a discovery of alterity and an originary moment where the self comes into being – it precedes utterance, action, and passivity. This encounter with the Other, as Levinas reiterates consistently, is phenomenological and precedes language; it is an encounter with the face of the Other that consequently yields questions of not merely identity and alterity, but ethics and justice as well. To engage with the Other, one must first encounter the Other (face-to-face) as that which remains unknowable and exterior to the totality of the same. It is then "a relation without relation" (Levinas, *Totality* 79). As Levinas explains "[i]n gaining access to it [Other] I maintain myself within the same [...] The face is present in its refusal to be contained" (*Totality* 194). The Other must therefore remain "infinitely transcendent, infinitely foreign; his face in which his epiphany is produced and which appeals to me breaks with the world that can be common to us" (ibid.).

For Levinas, an ethics is the interrogation of the question of the "Same" and not one of conduct or morality. In such a relation, the Other is not known or comprehended but interrogates and challenges the complacency of the self through desire, language, and the concern for justice. Thus, ethics begins with an encounter with the Other while maintaining that such a relation cannot simply be reduced to a symmetrical relationship since that becomes an act of totality. Ethics then is a calling into question of the "Same." The ethics of Levinas is one that prizes the irreducibility of the Other and it is in the interrogation of the irreducibility that ethics resides.

Language is the tool by which the relationship between I and Other is articulated. It "is a relation between separated terms" (Levinas, *Totality* 195) and an "exchange of ideas about the world" (ibid. 202). In the dialogue between I and Other, I encounters Other while reducing its infinity for language is inherently ontological. "The claim to know and to reach the other is realised in the relationship with the Other that is cast in the discourse of language – where the essential is the interpellation, the vocative" (Levinas, *Totality* 69). The Other is thereby objectified. I is interpellated by the Other as "things manifest themselves in answer to a question relative to which they have meaning" (ibid. 177). Such a calling into being via language is a consequence of an attempt to express (the face of) the Other. Yet "expression does not consist in giving us the Other's interiority" (Levinas, *Totality* 202). It is, therefore, in

language that absolute difference, inconceivable in terms of formal logic, is established (ibid. 195). The face of the Other, as Levinas points out, stirs a confrontation that impacts the I as affective moments or interruptions. Such forceful interruptions, derived from an encounter, discloses opportunities for dialogic engagement and as this develops the trace of the encounter with the Other becomes intensified further giving rise to a question of ethics and justice.

The desire for Western interculturalists such as Schechner and Brook to articulate, via language performative or linguistic, the face-to-face encounter with the (cultural) Other is the source of Orientalist tendencies. The need to enunciate (and thereby subjugate) that which is different reduces the Other to a composite of I as Being. On the intercultural stage, the confrontation between I and Other calls into being a discourse of power not as negotiation but, inevitably, as an assertion of I over Other and an assimilation of the Other into totality. In the act of reducing the Other who reveals to I the uniqueness of the self in the face-to-face encounter to objective knowledge, in a framework of a priori moral ideals, is a violence to the Other's alterity. In the context of intercultural performance practice, the ambition to discover an ontology of the Other by one's own terms leads then to an aggressive imperialist impulse and a desire to speak for the Other now regarded as subaltern. It is, as Levinas would observe, a gesture at totalising and totality. Lawrence Cahoone describes this inherently unequal relationship in intercultural exchange acutely when he states:

> What appear to be cultural units—human beings, words, meanings, ideas, philosophical systems, social organizations—are maintained throughout constitutive repression, an active process of exclusion, opposition, and hierarchisation [...] other units are represented as foreign or 'other' through a hierarchical dualism in which the first is privileged or favoured while the other is deprivileged or devalued in some way (11).

Cahoone's conception of such an analytic strategy in postmodernism (or postmodern texts) resounds with Saidian Orientalism. Culture is conceived in oppositional and brutal differentiation locked within a dualistic mode that empowers Self (West) over Other (East). Western interculturalism has been consistently regarded at best a naïve appropriation of foreign texts and cultural forms and at worst an imperialistic force that masks itself as benevolent artistic intent and aesthetic product in search of a universal humanism. It features "the appropriation and annihilation of indigenous, pre-modern practices in traditional societies by a rapacious 'First World' global capitalism'" (Singleton, "Interculturalism" 628). As Christopher Balme asserts, "theatrical syncretism is in most cases, a conscious, programmatic strategy to fashion a new form of theatre in the light of colonial or post-colonial experience" (2). Western intercultural theatre is complicit, subscribes to, and sustains Occidental

hegemonies. Interculturalism "cannot be separated from the larger history of Orientalism in which it has been inscribed" (Bharucha, "Somebody's Other" 206).

Interculturalism In / From Asia

While the ethics of intercultural practice – with the West readily identified as Self and all (Eastern) others as Other – has formed the focal point of theoretical and academic debates and continues to be so, new experimental practices have emerged in Asia. These Other models of interculturalism from Asia have not only gained worthy attention in their specific cultural and national locales but also international ones with many riding on the international festival circuit. Asian interculturalism, as a development of the European strand, interrogate existing theories and debates yielding new ways of comprehending intercultural relations and interactions.

Recognising that interculturalism has always been explained by inequities of power between East and West with the focus thereby kept on the West, Craig Latrell presents arguments for this misplaced belief in intercultural transfer as a one-way phenomenon – a cultural monologue. He believes that Other cultures are not passive receivers of Western ideas but active participants in, and manipulators of, such influence. Non-Western artists do consciously adapt and reinvent Western performance forms and narratives (45-46). In response to Pavis's unilinear model of intercultural exchange, Lo and Gilbert propose a collaborative / negotiated framework where the intercultural process is a dialogic "two-way flow" ("Topography" 44). Both collaborators are cultural sources and the target culture is located in between on a fluid continuum that is not fixed (ibid.). Such a model positions intercultural exchange as one that is subject to gain and loss, attraction and disavowel within an identifiable socio-political context that frames the exchange (ibid. 45).

There is, identifiably, a different interculturalism from Asia that is remarked against the practices of Brook, Mnouchkine and Schechner. The currents of appropriation have shifted as seen in the ways in which Asia uses Shakespeare, regarded as authority and icon par excellence of Western literary and performance tradition, in Asian contexts and spaces. The proliferation of these productions exemplifies Latrell's argument that interculturalism is not always an imperialistic act of the West consuming the richness and diversity of the East. In the act 'after appropriation,' Asian theatre practitioners have unreservedly staged Western classics and borrowed Western performance styles such as the Stanislavski method or Brechtian 'alienation.' Works by Taiwanese Wu Hsiing-Kuo (吴兴国), for example *Li Er Zai Ci*

[李尔在此, *Lear is here*] (2001) and *Yuwang Chengguo* [慾望城國, *The Kingdom of Desire*] (based on Shakespeare's *Macbeth*) (1986), exemplify China's traditional theatrical form *jingju* (京剧); in utilising, adapting and re-positioning Shakespeare for its socio-political use. Yukio Ninagawa's 'Japanese' stagings of Shakespeare, Chekhov, Brecht, and Beckett represent a re-negotiation and reversal of the West / East polemics. In an attempt to preserve the oldest form of Balinese dance-drama, Yayasan Arti's *Gambuh Macbeth* (1998) further demonstrates how indigenous 'source' cultures can invert, reshape and renovate the target culture for its own socio-political agendas.[17] Shakespeare becomes the vehicle by which cultural practices confer a representative value on their own art which rides on his authority as representation of the Western artistic tradition.[18]

Such practices of 'Asian' interculturalism are still however locked within the dialectics of a unilinear model – the currents have merely been reversed. It is with Singaporean Ong Keng Sen's *Flying Circus Project* – consisting of adaptations of three Shakespearean tragedies namely *King Lear*, *Othello* and *Hamlet* – that the intercultural is made complex and the unilinear model disrupted for in these productions, Ong employed a diverse range of Asian performance practices and placed them on the stage with each culture speaking its own native tongue and performing its own distinct tradition. Diverse cultural bodies, performance practices, styles, and languages performed an Asian interculturality as resistance to Western modes of interculturalism and (re)presentations of Asia. Ong's trilogy has since re-opened discussions of intercultural typologies and models for it dislocated existing unilinear frameworks and re-positioned arguments about the foreign / familiar, source / target. Ong's interculturalism was interculturalism that intended to alienate, defamiliarise and de-contextualise. Source and target cultures, as prevailing concepts of intercultural exchange, could no longer be applied.

Much of 'Asian' interculturalism has been concerned with the dramatisation of Western canonical works particularly those of Shakespeare. As ur-text and mastertext, Shakespeare stands, with colonial authority, for a universal theatre whose works reveal an all too human condition and a shared human experience. In one of his seminal works, *The Invention of the Human*, Harold Bloom attributes the creation of human nature to Shakespeare. It was, according to Bloom, Shakespeare who not only invented the English language but also originated the modern human psyche – Personality (4).

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[17] For more information on this production, see the Arti Foundation website <http://www.artifoundation.org/productions.html>.

[18] See Yong Li Lan, "Ong Keng Sen's Desdemona, Ugliness, and the Intercultural Performative" in *Theatre Journal* 56 (2004): 251-256 on Shakespeare's use and socio-political value in Asia. See also Erika Fisher-Lichte in *The Show and the Gaze of Theatre: A European Perspective* on the use of Shakespeare in China and Japan as means of political reform in the arts.

> Early modern English was shaped by Shakespeare: the Oxford English Dictionary is made in his image. Later modern human beings are still being shaped by Shakespeare; not as Englishmen, or as American women, but in modes increasingly postnational and postgender. He has become the first universal author, replacing the Bible in secularized consciousness (Bloom 10).

While dated notions of Western humanism and bold claims of cultural authority underlie Bloom's analysis, it is undeniably Shakespeare's iconicity in the Western literary tradition that has led the 'East' to rabidly consume his works. The willing subscription to the principle of his universality is that which makes possible an intercultural dialogue between Eastern and Western performance forms and a platform for the exploration of another culture's relationship to Western culture. Yuki Hata, representative of The Japan Foundation Asia Centre and producer of Ong's *Lear*, explains the choice of Shakespeare for an Asian intercultural project as one that was based on a decision to "avoid introducing bias in favour of the playwright's own culture" (*Lear*, Singapore Programme Notes 4) and "present a work that was not from a specific Asian country and that already enjoyed a universal existence" (ibid.). Shakespeare's universal significance and the potential for Asia's dismantling and re-assembling of his work was what prompted Ong's intercultural Shakespeare trilogy (ibid.). Ironically, such an opinion remains, in an age of postcolonial sentiments, counter-subversive since it denigrates (unwittingly) cultures that have not heard or seen Shakespeare and relegates them as alien-others to Asia within Asia. His views echo the attitudes that further sustain the hegemonies of a political economy where developed nations (in particular Western) dictate the positions of centrality and marginality. Shakespeare's seeming applicability to all cultures, revealing what can be regarded as the human condition shared by all of humanity in spite of cultural, racial or ethnic backgrounds, is that which has explained his popularity on the Asian intercultural stage.

The presence of Shakespeare on the Asian stage cannot be said to be a monolithic cultural or political response. There can be "no single paradigm of cultural production [that] can be evoked independently of the very different performance practices" (Gillies et. al. 259) of 'Asian Shakespeares' for Asia itself, as this thesis will subsequently present, is an amorphous concept whose seeming unitary identity is derived from Orientalist inscriptions by the West and formed as a reactionary strategy by Asians for 'Asia.' Asia is distinctly not a homogenous geographical place but a heterogeneous imagined space, a space essentialised by the West and a "neo-colonialist generalisation of cultural different" (Yong, "Desdemona" 251). Shakespeare's assimilation into China cannot be said to be like that of Japan or India, or various parts of South-East Asia for these locales "do not share the same discursive space, the same analytic

imperatives, the same values or voice" (ibid. 260). The performance of Shakespeare in Asia is then a performance of a statement of relationship between Asian culture and what Shakespeare represents. It is a performance of a relationship defined in terms of foreignness and of the historical contexts by which he was introduced into a foreign culture (ibid. 267). Any performative adaptation of Shakespeare is consequently a negotiation and interrogation of a culture's self-image in relation to the Western canon (ibid.).

In spite of these diverse re-presentations, adaptations and re-inscriptions of Shakespeare, his works resonate powerfully with the popular imagination and it is perhaps not, as Bloom has mistakenly believed, the quality of inventing the human but a precession of that quality and a precession of Shakespeare as popular human(ity) that has led to his integration within many cultures.

Considered within the framework of globalisation and transnational currents of economic movements, Shakespeare is cultural capital that can be easily transacted on the global festival market. His name readily invokes sales and profit revenues, and is fiscal object that can be easily bartered transculturally. In a post-show dialogue of *Li Er Zai Ci* ("Lear is Here") performed in Singapore 2005, Wu Hsing-Kuo was confronted with queries about the dramatisation of Shakespeare, and the reasons behind the selection of Shakespearean texts to revive a dying performance art (京剧, *jingju*). For Wu, Shakespeare is a name readily known and needs no introduction. His name and works are by far more widely known globally than the Chinese classics. Appropriation and localisation is the logical motivation to reinvigorate a vanishing tradition while introducing a performance practice across cultural and national divides. Shakespeare is the 'global' subject par excellence and in every way a commodity of global capitalism that can be retailed.[19]

The Theatre In / Of Globalisation: Interculturalism / Cosmopolitanism

To decipher these emerging intercultural theatrical practices as a cultural phenomenon is to understand globalisation. The recent works of Asian intercultural Shakespeare illustrate the transforming nature of intercultural theatre as one that sees departure from the European models of bi-way, unilinear transcultural hybridity. Interculturalism today "is deeply imbricated in the concept of globalisation and the perceived deterritorialisation of social,

[19] For an interview with Wu on *Li Er Zai Ci*, visit *Shakespeare Performance in Asia* < http://web.mit.edu/shakespeare/asia/interviews/WuHsingkuo.html>. The website also contains a short video excerpt of the performance.

cultural and political boundaries for those in the developed world" (Gilbert and Lo, *Cosmopolitics* 10). Globalisation, commonly understood, is the integration of internationalities and a process by which economic, technological, sociocultural and geo-political paradigms amalgamate in a unified force that is turning the world into a single society (Croucher 10). 'Transculturalism' or 'Internationalism' is no longer sufficient in describing the currents of cross-cultural theatrical practice for the former is a descriptive account of merger and convergence of cultures while the latter, as Schechner ascertains, is an exchange between nation states, and it gestures to official exchanges and artificial kinds of boundaries (Pavis, *Intercultural Reader* 42). Both insufficiently account for the intervening social, geo-political and economic discourses that construct syncretic performance forms – as process and product. In the surge of compelling forces that both create and reinvigorate globalisation it is necessary that studies of interculturalism involve, with sustained deliberation, the economic, social, and political structures of the local in the global, and the global in the local. As Gilbert and Lo suggest, "the terms of cross-cultural engagement are rarely free of power, but rather embedded in asymmetrical relationships dominated by the forces of commerce, imperialism and / or militarism" (*Cosmopolitics* 10).

Globalisation has thus become the stage for a performance of hybridised cultural commodities driven by the engines of global capitalism. Transmigration of peoples, ideas, and histories, assisted by high-speed travel and information transfer facilitated by relentlessly cutting-edge technologies, has created new forms of interculturalism that ride on the capitalist mentalities of festival circuits. Comprehending the local is now insufficient for it must be situated in relation to the global market forces and transmigratory patterns. Such a re-positioning assaults notions of visible national and cultural frontiers. In relating globalisation to interculturalism, Singleton notes

> one of the reasons why First World interculturalism has become a global phenomenon is that it purloins the surfaces of other cultures in order to attain the greatest market share, by reaching out for the largest common denominator of mythologised cultural icons [; performances] with no real national or social hinterland other than the globalised community of high-art consumers [...] (Singleton, "Interculturalism" 629).

Theatre today has as such entered "an age of global performance" (McKenzie 6). The globalisation of performance and the performance of globalisation, as intercultural theatrical forms, challenge Pavis's outmoded one-way cultural transference for there is now a distributed transfer beyond dual-polarities of West / East, Asia / Europe, Self / Other axes, a network with a non-finite number of nodes, "each always already open to exappropriation" (ibid.).

Comprehending the cosmopolitics of intercultural performance is consequently constructive for evaluating theatre as a globalised phenomenon. As Gilbert and Lo propound,

> theatre's material aspects thus enable us to apprehend the contingencies of cosmopolitanism as a form of cross-cultural praxis as well as a discourse about cross-cultural engagement [...] we can also begin to isolate cosmopolitanism's normative and / or evaluative functions as a regime of value that regulates particular practices and their meaning at various times within specific communities (*Cosmopolitics* 13).

Cosmopolitanism, as an economic derivative, drives interculturalism and shows how the characteristic feature of touring at international festival events is deeply imbricated with the production of the event – the telemetries of production, distribution, and consumption that is connected with the operation of transnational capital (Gilbert and Lo, *Cosmopolitics* 13). Locating intercultural performance on a global wheel of trans-active economics would radically colour the lens by which audiences perceive as that which is foreign / familiar, Self / Other, West / East. The variegated audience types whose dissimilar cultural knowledge and backgrounds would inevitably be testimony that could readily discredit any unilinear understanding of (inter)cultural exchange.

Interculturalism as a bi-way process becomes, consequently, reconceived and redefined in the light of cosmopolitical currents. The concepts of foreign and familiar are made complicated when this (false) dichotomy is presented from more than one viewpoint. As Yong observes, productions that are designed and staged for both the 'foreign' and 'familiar' audiences (cosmopolitan viewers) who can occupy multiple positions, identify with both the familiar and foreign, or are situated outside of these positions, distort existing models of intercultural exchange as a presentation of familiar / foreign cultures, source and target ("Fiction" 532). Globalisation, as cultural, economic and political phenomena, complicates as it reconfigures performances of cultural encounters for it has "exposed the foreign within the self, that desire for the other is almost a pre-condition of modernity with its teleological drives for the production of novelty" (Singleton, "Presidential Address" 8).

A Hermeneutic of Listening In / To Interculturalism

A historical trajectory of intercultural theory and practice proves necessary not only to locate the current state of research but also to position the thesis in the larger discourse, and identify the gaps in research. As seen, studies of intercultural performance today have been very much concerned, as briefly surveyed, with the politics of cultural practice, the authority of cultural

traditions, the location of culture(s) in the interstices of exchange, and the theorising of cultural transactions on the stage. Critical studies and performance analyses have focussed largely on the mise en scène, the visual texts, and the visuality of the intercultural disregarding, consequently, areas of equal importance in performance analysis such as the intercultural process(es): the cultural and ethical relations between performers, the economics of employment and trade relations, and the political economy of the festival circuit. Other considerable areas worthy of critical consideration, but have yet to garner sufficient attention, include cultural translations and audience reception in differing cultural locales, the performative implications of cultural spaces / places (site / locale), and the performative function of sound and music in intercultural performance. Little has been done to critically examine the role sound and music plays in performance, and the ways in which an aural experience and an awareness of the interchanges in form (musical instruments) and style (performance traditions), can serve to illuminate what is oftentimes regarded as a confusing confrontation of cultures presented on stage. The thesis thus seeks to capitalise on this need for a listening to the sounds of interculturalism on the stage and wishes to examine a reception aesthetics employing acoustemological (the study of sound environments) and akoumenological (a phenomenology of listening) frameworks of analysis. A return to the immanence of the performance text, locating critical perspectives in the materiality of the performance (cultural sounds, music, acoustic relations), in addition to the phenomenological composition of viewing / listening to an intercultural work, is what the thesis hopes to establish as a viable structure.

There can perhaps be, in a project of such multi-cultural and multi-modal nature, no specific or singular approach to the study of intercultural performance since the prefix already necessitates a multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary approach to such a complex performance form. The very nature of intercultural performance then demands an interdisciplinary approach since it is, perhaps, in the interstices of such differing disciplines that the inter-activity in intercultural performances can be best comprehended. However, through a close study of specifically the performative functions of sound / music in Asian intercultural performance, this thesis hopes to establish a feasible approach, though not a definitive one, for comprehending the complexities of intercultural production and cross-cultural exchanges on the stage.

Culture is as much heard as it is to be seen and acoustemology attempts to reinstate the importance of listening in the establishment of cultural practices and demarcation of spaces / places.[20] The thesis would then examine the use, adaptation, and function of culturally

[20] For a more detailed explication of acoustemology and sound spaces, see Chapter 1, p 55.

prescriptive sound / music and further seeks to address the question "what is performed when cultural sounds and languages (both acoustic and linguistic) are overlaid, mixed, combined and commingled?" Considered in the broader framework of performance analysis, the thesis would investigate this interactivity of (cultural) sounds, as performative texts, and their role in the construction of the intercultural spectacle – one that is not merely visual but aural as well.

An analytical approach that effectively engages and articulates the performative function of sound and music in intercultural performance – an acoustic interculturalism – is consequently imperative since intercultural performances often employ performance modes 'foreign' to itself, specifically Asian performance practices. Many Asian performance traditions that intercultural projects, both Western and Asian, appropriate and adapt have their roots in deeply religious or social rituals. These rituals and traditional performance forms are often accompanied by music and song. In fact, music and song often form the vertebrae of Asian performance traditions for they motivate the plot, delineate character, and maneuver the dramatic action by dictating the rhythms of the performance. Dance, music and song form "a major structural component in the dramatic composition and story-telling" (Brandon 6). The narrative structure is woven and built around the musical for song is the major component of the dramatic structure. Sound and music are the necessary means by which the structure of meaning and experience is constructed in Asian performance traditions. In the traditional Japanese theatrical style of *Kabuki*, singing, dancing, and music are integral features of the performance. The term *Kabuki*, understood etymologically and seen as individual *kanji* characters, literally means *sing* (歌), *dance* (舞), and *skill* (伎).[21] *Kabuki* is thus often translated to mean the art of singing and dancing.[22] Balinese performance forms such as the *Topeng* mask dances and the *Legong* dances do not proceed without a gamelan ensemble to demarcate the performative moment, direct the dramatic action, and create the rhythms of performance. In Beijing Opera, otherwise known as *jingju* (京剧), a musical style called the *pihuang* (皮黄)is used and it serves a strictly theatrical function with two principal musical styles – *erhuang* (二黄) and *xipi* (西皮)– employed, each a formulaic style-sheet that prescribes the number of metrical arrangements marking the accents and unaccented beats, and used for works performed as well as to evoke different moods.[23] While the ensemble of gongs and cymbals serve as cues for actors, they also accentuate emotional moments in the dramatic action thereby guiding the audience to be emoted at the right moments. The singing, performed by

[21] This is recognisably an insufficient translation of the term for any act of linguistic translation is always a 'failure' when one considers the slippages of semantics, the gaps and fissures of cultural codifications, nuances and contextual referents.

[22] For a deeper explication of the origins of Kabuki, see Benito Ortolani, *The Japanese Theatre: From Shamanistic Ritual to Contemporary Pluralism*, 162-206.

[23] The principle behind these styles resembles a 'fake book' used by Jazz musicians.

the actors, is closely interwoven with the patterns played by the string and percussion instruments and together with the gestural forms and choreographic movements. As such, the music becomes integral to the lyrical performance.[24]

Music, sound, and song in intercultural performances are consequently integral performative texts, actants that assist in the construction of the culturally kaleidoscopic mise en scène. A consideration of their use and performance, and their interaction with other signifying texts (both performative and cultural), is what this thesis seeks to do using specific intercultural performances including those of Ariane Mnouchkine, Lin Zhaohua, Yukio Ninagawa and Ong Keng Sen as cases in point. In so doing, the thesis wishes to establish ways of comprehending the intercultural acoustically and posit a considered listening. Several questions can be posed in the light of such a project: How does sound demarcate culture and how has Asia been appropriated acoustically in intercultural theatre practices? Do these sounds, in their intercultural employment, fortify the hegemonies of a West / East dichotomy and mirror the prevailing neo-imperialistic discourses found in the visual spectacle? Can sound provide a new means of accessing and discussing the intercultural? While the thesis recognises the impossibility of locating a definitive and satisfactory response to these questions, the process of interrogation is necessary. The contribution of the thesis to intercultural studies would therein lie in its interrogative nature of the ways in which sound / music can reposition one's understanding of interculturalism and the intercultural process.

A Theory of Intercultural Reception: Generating Theatre Meaning

From the given survey of the intercultural topography and an examination of the 'gaps' in research and analysis, it is reasonable to conclude that there can be no totalising creed about cultural exchange on the stage. An all-embracing theory of interculturalism would be inadvisable and *unnecessary* for intercultural performance, as an ontological concept, lacks any coherence in process, product, aesthetic philosophy, performance principle, critical position or social and dramatic purpose. Interculturalism is, as Bharucha notes, yet to be "cogently theorised – it is at once too processual and scattered in its multiple locations and modes of expression to be subsumed under any one theoretical framework" (*Politics* 42). Being assured about the openness of the intercultural terrain and its plurality of form, function and definition is perhaps a necessity in engaging with it discursively. Trinh T. Minh-ha phrases such an

[24] For a more thorough exposition on the use of music and instrumentation in Beijing Opera, see A.C. Scott's "The Performance of Classical Theatre" in *Chinese Theatre: From Its Origins to the Present Day*, 126-129.

obligation most aptly when she notes how in cutting and moving across cultural boundaries and borderlines, it "is to live aloud the malaise of categories and labels. It is to resist simplistic attempts at classifying, to resist the comfort of belonging to a cultural or aesthetic genre, and of producing classifiable works" (107-108).

Such a position, though necessarily complex and demanding as it resists convenient theorisations, would prove useful to adopt for this thesis does not seek to (re)conceive a universal theory of intercultural performance but hopes instead to open the discourse by calling for attention to the micro-narratives of intercultural performativity particularly the ways in which sounds perform the interstices of cultures in performance. There must, consequently, be "a respect for imperfection" (Bharucha, *Politics* 52) in the comprehension and analysis of intercultural collaborations for the intercultural necessarily and always interrogates the subjectivities of the perceiver: "From whose eyes, and from which perspective do we observe [or *hear*] the 'inter'? (Bharucha, *Politics* 52. Own insertion).

This subjectivity of enunciating an aesthetics of reception in theatre is aptly expressed by Pavis when he says that "the authority of the subjective, never neutral, gaze of the spectator [...] should not be eliminated altogether; on the contrary, it must be taken into account in the spectator's relationship with the stage" (*Dictionary* 258). The audience's subjective construction of the spectacle is a necessary consideration in performance analysis. Marco de Marinis, too, considers the importance of the spectator in the creation of theatrical meaning as s/he is essentially the "co producer of the performance" (158). Elaine Aston and George Savona write also of the spectator as necessarily involved in a "project of creative collaboration, with the dramatist and actor" (160). Julian Hilton develops notions of spectatorship and involvement further by suggesting how performances transform audiences so that they no longer feel passive but are 'sensed' into action and to be the action. To have done so would be to have "intervened in the gaps and indeterminacies of the performance as to have broken down the distinction between the stage and the auditorium, the performer and the spectator" (Hilton 133). The audience is thus not only a precondition of performance but also a means by which the performance and performer transform the potential into the actual,

in a wider cultural context, via the audience (ibid. 134). Current theories of theatre semiotics have thus increasingly become concerned about the role of the spectator (in the light of reader-response frameworks) as interpretative subject (and subjective interpreter).[25] Performance analysis, as the search for methodologies involved in the generation of meaning in theatre and performance, has always confronted the pervasive issue of postulating (imaginary) positions of

[25] See Eli Rozik, *Generating Theatre Meaning: A Theory and Methodology of Performance Analysis*, 16.

an informed spectator / audience. It, furthermore, essentialises what could be disparate experiences and knowledge-levels of a variegated composition of audience types and spectatorial backgrounds. Performance analysis thus often postulates a singular gaze of an implied spectator. This implied spectator, expanded from Wolfgang Iser's notion of an 'implied reader,' exists in order for the performance text to be realised in its full meaning just as the implied reader "embodies all those predispositions necessary for a work to exercise its effect – predispositions laid down, not by an empirical outside reality, but by the text itself" (Rozik, 162). The implied spectator thus stands as Other to the real spectator for the real spectator is "limited to various extents, reflecting various handicaps, such as partial knowledge of the theatre medium, incomplete cultural baggage and psychological biases and inhibitions" (ibid.). It allows performance analysis to postulate an objective reading of performance for the real spectator ambiguates the process due to personal prejudices and subjectivities.

While it is relatively uncomplicated and uncontroversial to converse about the production processes of a performance, through an identification with / of the implied spectator – its historicisation, technical construction, stage convention and thematic significance – or even to explain discursively the semiology of the mise en scène, which includes a study of the stage objects, object relations, performative bodies, movement, costume, light, sound (i.e. a totality of description and interpretation of a performance text), and proposing audience responses and meaning derived by the spectator, as a consequence of interactive and communicative sign-texts on stage, such an endeavour proves more challenging when evaluating audience responses to an intercultural performance. An implied spectator, as a framework of analysis, functions satisfactorily in 'monocultural' theatre but such a framework begins to fragment in the light of multicultural performances. To speak even of a 'unitary' implied spectator would prove difficult. Productions such as those by Ong present radical re-visions of cultural forms on the stage while interspersing and hybridising elements of the old and the new. In addition, culturally diverse languages both linguistic and theatrical are placed alongside each other in the performative moment. Radical alienation is, often, a (deliberate) consequence of an intercultural spectacle.[26] Some member of the audience will always and necessarily be alienated from a particular aspect of the performance. Unlike the *Verfremdungseffekt* that Brecht postulates, or the postmodern alienation that poststructuralist performances seek to evoke, alienation in intercultural performance always and necessarily excavates, in the act of perception and spectation, the dialectics of identification / dis-identification, Self / Other, as was earlier mentioned. In placing distinct cultural forms and languages alongside each other intercultural performances inevitably dramatise interstices and intersections – where one culture begins and another ends – in a process of differentiation.

[26] Exemplification will be given and a more thorough discussion provided in subsequent chapters.

Intercultural theatre is, as such, a theatre of the audience for it interrogates the knowledge construction of the perceiver and assesses the audience's (lack of) understanding by constantly juxtaposing the familiar with the foreign. The process of comprehension is a process of dismantling the cultural sign-texts and identifying that which is 'own' and 'other'. In this sense intercultural theatre is then meta-theatre for it stages its own 'otherness' and that which an audience must always and necessarily be (culturally) alienated from. It is theatrical style / genre that performs its own theatricality. It further exposes the inadequacies of meaning for an audience such that holistic understanding is impossible.

Performance analysis accordingly encounters a significant problem when examining the role of the spectator in the act of intercultural spectation. If theatrical meaning is generated in an interactive and bi-active negotiation between the performance text and the spectator, what meaning is generated when spectators fail to comprehend the intercultural mise en scène composed by multiple conflicting and competing cultural texts in the confluence of performance?[27] The conundrum can be further extended to a poetics of listening in / to an intercultural performance, of which this thesis is primarily concerned with, for there are wide discrepancies in what is heard and recognized as familiar / unfamiliar. Sound is, above spectacle, culturally prescribed and inscribed. An implied spectator cannot be conceived meaningfully or objectively for a median of responses is difficult to ascertain in this confrontation of cultural sign-texts which further evokes an audience's sense of cultural (dis)location.

The thesis recognises therefore the hermeneutic problems of an interpretation and analysis of intercultural performance for such an act necessarily and always reflects the subjective composition and position of the spectator – in this case the author of this thesis as subject. Acknowledging this subject-ivity, analyses provided in this thesis will consequently be framed with the cultural subjections of this author whose own identity as cultural hybrid, as it is with the case of most post-independence Singaporeans, will consistently be an evaluative concern. The thesis will thus not attempt to project illusions of objectivity but autoreflexively acknowledge the subjectivity of responses of that which could be termed a 'real' spectator. Such a spectative position recognises that Asian identities are disparate and diverse and the modern Singaporean is a hybrid of cultural confluences, fragmented and dislocated cultural identities. S/he is one whose identity is best described as a cosmopolitan 'New Asian,' whose absent cultural affiliations and rootedness are a consequence of an economic imperative that has shaped a financially affluent, hyper-urbanised, hyper-mediatised, diasporic identity. The

[27] Yong Li Lan addresses this problem of 'not-understanding' Asian intercultural spectacles of Shakespeare with provocative acuity. See "Shakespeare and the Fiction of the Intercultural" in *A Companion to Shakespeare and Performance*, 527-549.

rhetoric of multiculturality, as a consequence off the nation state's immigrant past, is that which has been celebrated and promoted as national ideology yet this very ideology marks a "fragmentation and certain 'lack' of wholeness, authenticity, and vibrancy" (Bharucha, *Consumed in Singapore* 9). Singaporeans are, as prominent Singaporean playwright Kuo Pao Kun notes, "cultural orphans" for "none of the cultures that we have inherited are whole" (26). It is in this state of cultural orphancy that much off the critical assessments of (Asian) interculturalism will be made.

Acoustic Interculturalism: Hearing Self / Other & The In-Between

Acknowledging these subjective position(s), this thesis will postulate receptions to sound as possibilities of listening. While much of intercultural performance analysis has been predicated on sight (visual texts), as earlier mentioned, the meanings sound / music can generate should not be disregarded. An analysis of the performativity of sound can begin, as such, only with a thorough explication of the nature of sound and its importance in intercultural performance. The first chapter will establish a mode of listening to sound-space as it relates to cultural spaces and places. Sparse critical attention has been paid to the formulation and employment of sound in theatre and performance studies in spite of its importance in any theatrical performance. Considered comments on sound and music have been unsurprisingly scarce and possibly absent though theatre semioticians such as Pavis recognise their semiotic contribution to the totality of the stage performance.[28] Analysis and study in this area has often been, regrettably, cursory or descriptive in nature due to the inability of critics and reviewers to negotiate meaning or performative functions in sounds which are culturally determined. In addition, it is difficult for a layperson, untrained in ethnomusicology nor exposed to more culturally specific tones, to recognise and further comprehend the kaleidoscopic reverberations performed in an intercultural production. There is, as such, no existing framework for the study of sound in interculturalism. The chapter will introduce the concepts of a soundscape and the ways in which such a mode of deep relational listening between sound and place can create acoustic environments unique to cultural spaces. Other frameworks of acoustic analysis will also be considered such as akoumenology – a phenomenology of listening. The chapter explores the possibility of initiating specific methodologies to establish an acoustic interculturalism, one that employs a multidisciplinary approach of a socio-semiotic framework, ethnomusicology, and a phenomenology of acoustic experience.

[28] See Pavis, *Dictionary of Theatre*, "Music and Theatre," 226 and "Rhythm," 312.

The following chapter attempts an application of the various approaches to determining a variation of an acoustic interculturalism using Ariane Mnouchkine's *Tambours Sur La Digue* (2003).[29] The chapter seeks to address how Western ears conceive of Eastern sounds and examine the concordance and discordance, consonances and dissonances, tonalities and atonalities in Mnouchkine's intercultural tapestry that has at once received critical acclaim but also rebuke. In *Tambours*, Mnouchkine reconceives and reconceptualises the Japanese traditional marionette performing art Bunraku (文楽) by having live bodies perform the roles of puppets – in a reversal of representation where flesh becomes wood. While the visually dense and spectacular mise en scène underscores the intensity of the plot and serves to consume the spectator in the visual narrative, it is in the disembodied sounds that the fissure of the intercultural is heard. The articulated French spoken by the puppeteers whose sounds are disembodied from these human puppets underscore issues of power relations prevalent in intercultural discourse and accentuate Orientalist accusations made against Mnouchkine. The movement of the lips and its speaking voice dismembered from the performing body, the incongruence of timbre embodied in accent and language, juxtaposed with the visual texts of an Asian performance ritual, create ruptures of cultural identities that serve to perform an acoustic appropriation as aesthetic event. Along with music director Jean-Jacque Lemêtre's eclectic soundtrack of 'exotic' sounds and simulated rhythms of Korean *SamulNori*, *Tambours* exemplifies the problematics of Western interculturalism: a surface-play of forms and styles subordinated to the pleasure principle of consuming and reinventing the 'Orient.'

These currents of appropriation are, as early noted, not a one-way street of cross-cultural exchange. In the recent years, Asian performances have also sought to plough the West for its cultural richness and diversity in terms of theatrical material, forms and styles. While much has been critiqued of Western intercultural spectacles, there is a growing interest in engaging with Asian representations of the West and of themselves performed through a refracted seeing and an 'echolocation' – where the Asian self hears Asia through the reverberations of the Western Other. In eminent Chinese theatre director Lin Zhaohua's *Richard III* (理查三世) (2001), a deliberate acoustic strategy of employing pop-rock music, and jazz, is made in an attempt to create a 'pop' aesthetic as a means of establishing an acoustic intercultural that reflects a modern globalised China – where the popularity of these tunes and its contemporariness becomes the sonic interstice between West and East. Yukio Ninagawa, Japan's foremost director of intercultural Shakespeares, employs the sonic signatures of archetypal 'Western' instruments such as the harp and the harpsichord in *Twelfth Night*

[29] The version referred to here is the 2003 DVD production of the performance and not the 'live' performance.

(*NINAGAWA* 十二夜, 2007) as the primary means of retaining an acoustic residue of Western sonicity in a dominant mode of Japanese Kabuki. Engaging Shakespeare with Kabuki, Ninagawa's artistic strategy of interweaving cultures remains dominantly one of an acoustic dimension where sound is the means by which the 'foreign' is introduced to the 'local.' Retaining the musical conventions of Kabuki such as the *geza-ongaku*, *aikata* and *nagauta*,[30] the interjections of a popular advent hymn sung in Latin, inadvertently puncture the Japanese frame with 'foreign' acoustics that is made 'familiar' with the *tsuzumi* drums and the voices of the Japanese boy actors. What results however is a sonic defamiliarisation to the ears of varied listeners. This defamiliarisation is, perhaps, then the echoloca(lisa)tion of hearing Self with the ears of the Other.

The fourth chapter seeks to interrogate the notion of 'Asia' as monolithic idea and performative concept. Using Ong's second production in the Shakespeare trilogy entitled *Desdemona* (2000), it will question the notion of an 'Asian' soundscape as conceived by a culture that claims status as modern hybrid without tradition. *Desdemona* was Ong's attempt at performing an Asian interculturalism that was distinctly a performative act of resistance to Western intercultural spectacles produced by Brook and Mnouchkine. It employed a variety of Asian performance traditions such as *Kutiyattam*, *Kathakali* and *yokthe pwe* but placed them in juxtaposition that underscored the disjuncture between performance styles. Original compositions of Korean court and folk music were used extensively to interweave the disparate art forms held loosely by a fragmented narrative of Desdemona's acts of vengeance against Othello. What resulted was a performative failure of obscurity and non-comprehension – neither nothing nor being. By examining the soundscape of the production, the inscriptive silences and the eruptive cultural sounds (of song, chants, grunts, vocal effects), the chapter seeks to establish the ways in which a listening to Ong's radical intercultural work would reveal the (im)possibilities of performing or representing Asia. The soundscape can thus be said to be the acoustic action that mirrors, or resounds with, the haunting spectre of the visible and invisible ur-texts of 'Os' in Shakespeare's *Othello* while shattering that reflection. The acoustemologies of *Desdemona* expose a dislocated and fragmented 'Asia' one that is continually silenced and voided.

The final chapter seeks to engage the question of an acoustic universalism postulated by Ong's most recent intercultural work *Awaking*. As one of the opening shows of the Singapore Arts Festival in 2008, *Awaking* is Ong's attempt at finding a radically new theatrical language to enunciate the intercultural – music. Music's universal trait, its ethereal qualities and metaphysical properties, have allowed musicians and musicologists alike to posit it as a

[30] These forms of musical forms employed in Kabuki will be further explained in Chapter 3.

'language' of cultural transcendence. *Awaking* is the performative attempt at exploring concepts of musical universality as a bi-way of negotiating cultures on stage. Staged as an attempt to "bring together Shakespeare's plays and Tang Xian Zu's (汤显祖) classical *Kunqu* (昆曲) opera, *The Peony Pavilion*,"[31] (牡丹亭) the performance saw the attempted 'fusion' of 'Western' Renaissance music and Chinese classical sounds. While Ong's previous intercultural projects sought to explore the politics of intercultural performance through the exchange, layering, confrontation and inter-mixing of Asian performance modes as visual aesthetics, *Awaking* is a performance at the borders of theatrical and musical conventions as it features the music and musicians as central performative devices of staging the intercultural. Northern *Kunqu* opera, Chinese classical music and Elizabethan folk tunes from Shakespeare's plays were re-framed, re-contextualised, and artistically juxtaposed to explore the "differing yet connected philosophies on love, death, and the afterlife."[32] These humanist and 'universal' themes found expression in the 'universal' language of music. The chapter seeks to examine the possibilities of this new universal language of interculturalism – as implied by Ong's concordance of Eastern and Western sounds – and consider the cultural politics of such a deliberate fashioning of an intercultural soundscape.

Seen collectively, these various chapters explore acoustic interculturalism from the varied cultural positionalities that now see greater inter-action and inter-activity on the stage. These productions have been selected as they each, while claiming interculturality, reveal different 'communities' of cultural negotiation and perform diverse tangents of European interculturalism. More significantly, these productions advance the importance of sound's performativity in configuring the intercultural interstice, with each assuming a different mode and method of creating an intercultural soundscape. While the analytical focus remains as that of the soundscapes in performance using acoustic theories and musicological tools, the thesis will employ other modes of analysis such as semiotics and phenomenology to further consider the interaction of sound with the visual text (mise en scène). The discussions will also be framed by postcolonial readings, critical and cultural theorisations of intercultural performance, both in music and theatre, as well as ethnomusicological criticism and anthropological frameworks. In many ways, musical experience is social experience since the process of music-making and performance reflects a collective cultural and social appreciation as it communicates distinct signifiers of the culture and society in which these musics are produced. In intercultural theatre, the music and sounds employed to create the soundscapes of performance, as part of an intentional composition by music and/or artistic directors, do not

[31] "Director's Notes," Programme Notes, *Awaking*.
[32] *Awaking*, Publicity Material.

merely effect a new social 'reality' but reflects, in turn, these realities as well. The 'realities,' as heard in the social experiencing of an intercultural soundscape, are inherently political for social experience is, a priori, political. Cultural experience and construction, as aspects of social experience, remain intimately bound to, and consequent of, political motivations and intentions particularly in the modern globalised world where cultural tourism (and iconism), a prevalent feature of such transborder economies, is laden with responsibilities of national and/or cultural pride. By extension, therefore, the musical and social experiencing of intercultural soundscapes yield reverberations of cultural political contestations and negotiations – of Occidentalisms and Orientalisms, exoticisms and popularisations, appropriations and counter-appropriations. In a world that becomes arguably more 'homogenous,' an attentive deep listening to these performance hybrids may yet reveal new understandings and appreciation of difference – or perhaps the absence of it. The thesis thus seeks to be relevant as a work of cultural criticism as well in its attempt to trace the shifting sands of interculturality in performance as a product of global forces.

Chapter 1

The Performativity of Sound and the Soundscapes of Culture

The Nature of Sound & Its Performativity

A sustained study of sound has always been lacking in the field of performance analysis and performance criticism, and certainly absent in analyses and criticism of intercultural performances. In a globalised world of mediatised 'pop' culture, there is a privileging of the visible and the visual. We reside in a visual culture where meaning is often constructed, constituted, and mediated by what is seen and less of what is heard / listened to. Modernity is, as David Levin discusses in *Modernity and the Hegemony of Vision*, an essentially visual age. The advent of what is now regarded as commonplace media technologies, and the rapid advancement of high-technology hardware, such as high definition screens, high resolution imaging and advanced 3D graphics technology, has led to an obsession with sight (and can also be said to be a consequence of this self-same fixation). Man in modernity is consumed by technologies of seeing, observation and surveillance. Such a phenomenon extends Michel Foucault's deliberations on Jeremy Bentham's panopticon.[1] Epistemologies are mediated, accessed, produced and realised by the ocular sense. Human experience is now, as Wee and Tan describe, "saturated with the mediation of various forms of visual interfaces ranging from advertising posters to television programmes, mass-consumed Hollywood films and, of course, computer games" (Wee and Tan, 98). Meaning, information, knowledge and experience are pictorialised or visualised as visual *events* (Mirzoeff 3, 6. Own italics). Jean Baudrillard's simulations of the every-day and the hyperreal existence of the late 20th century are phenomena based on a visual understanding of the impact of a technologised world in which the barricades that safeguard the 'real' are disintegrating. The distinctions between the real and the virtual are not only blurring, where one bleeds into another, but also dissolving; it is a world where vision and virtuality overlap in a simulacrum that feeds off itself. Baudrillard's seminal and notoriously provocative theory then exemplifies a contemporary obsession with sight and a distinct privileging of the visual over all other senses in the epistemological and ontological composition of the world in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. A similar obsession with visuality and visual metaphors is found in philosophical discourses as well. A visualism of the world can be traced back to Aristotle's dictum that "above all we value sight [...] because sight is the principle source of knowledge and reveals many differences between one object and another" (51).

Epistemology, as the discourse of knowledge construction, is, in concordance with Aristotle's views, entrenched in a visual metaphor since terms such as the "enlightenment," "insight," or the "mind's eye" reveal a preoccupation with sight and seeing.[2] With the rise of

[1] See Michel Foucault, "Panopticism," *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 195-230.
[2] See Don Ihde, "In Praise of Sound," *Listening and Voice: A Phenomenology of Sound*, 3-16.

science, and the establishment of a scientific *Weltanschauung*, and the rapid developments in optic instrumentation that permit a visualisation of what was once invisible (such as cellular formations in organisms), this scientific view of the world continues a long standing preoccupation with vision. "Thus with increasingly passionate excitement humankind became more and more entranced with this extension of its vision" (Ihde, *Listening and Voice*6). This visualism, Ihde believes, is symptomatic of the history of thought and it has dominated our thinking about reality and experience (ibid.). We have 'forgotten' how sound, hearing, and listening are foundational to modern modes of knowledge, culture and social organisation and have now fallaciously come to believe, with the philosophical literature of the Enlightenment, that "sight alone or in its supposed difference from hearing explains modernity" (Sterne 3). Jacques Attali echoes this predominant 'anti-ocular' determination of knowledge echoed in auditory culture studies when he notes how

> [f]or twenty-five centuries, Western knowledge has tried to look upon the world. It has failed to understand that the world is not for the beholding. It is for hearing. It is not legible, but audible. Our science has always desired to monitor, measure, abstract, and castrate meaning, forgetting that life is full of noise and that death alone is silent: work noise, noise of man, and noise of beast. Noise bought, sold, or prohibited. Nothing essential happens in the absence of noise (3).

In performance analysis and criticism, the ocular sense, the process of viewing and seeing, and the interpretation of visual elements on stage, have often accounted for what is useful sensory information gathering. Theatre criticism and performance studies have always focussed on spectacle, the visuality of performance, and the visual text – the mise en scène, gesture, movement, the body of the actor, costume, colour, and space. The term 'spectacle,' derived etymologically from Latin *spectaculum* or *spectare* which means 'to look,' employed critically in performance studies, favours logically an analysis based on sight. It is, as Patrice Pavis defines, "anything that is the object of the gaze [...] especially something intended for public display" (*Dictionary* 346). Pavis further quotes Barthes by distinguishing 'spectacle' as "the universal category in whose species the world is seen" (ibid.). In addition, the term spectacle, in Western performance, has always been equalled with staging or the mise en scène: a composition of visual elements on the stage (Pavis, *Dictionary* 347). Little attempt has been made to comprehend the contribution that sound and/or music has in the construction of the structure of meaning and experience in a performance or in the creation of 'spectacle.' If we understand spectacle to be etymologically associated with that which is 'spectacular,' then the spectacular in performance is composed not merely visually but aurally as well. In the

introduction to *The Auditory Culture Reader*, Michael Bull and Les Back demonstrate how the dominance of the ocular and the visual has often meant "the experience of the other senses – touch, taste, smell and listening – has been filtered through a visualist framework" (2). 'Thinking' with one's ears would, as they believe, yield a different knowing of the world (3). According to Bull and Back, "[...] a visually based epistemology is both insufficient and often erroneous in its description, analysis and thus understanding of the social world" (ibid.).

Ihde espouses a similar view to move away from a "visually based epistemology" and taking an auditory turn. This turn to the "auditory dimension" is necessary for it can decentre a dominant tradition to discover how thought, and the history of thought, can be further comprehended if the metaphors of vision and visualism were consigned in the field of philosophy (Ihde, *Listening and Voice* 14). What is needed urgently is an ontology of the auditory, a "move from the present with all its taken-for-granted beliefs about vision and experience and step by step [...] move towards a radically different understanding of experience, one which has its roots in a *phenomenology* of auditory dimension" (ibid. 15).

This call to depart a visually based epistemology and to privilege a (re)turn to the auditory can be applied to theatre and performance studies as well for a comprehension, analysis, and 'thinking' of the sounds (and music) used in a performance would result in marked differences in the decoding of the theatrical event. Sound / Music, like all elements on stage, is performative since its ontological nature is one rooted in performance; sound exists in its performance. It is, to employ terminologies in theatre semiology, a significant sign-text that contributes to the holistic semiology of performance and the coherent "design of a dramatic action [...] the whole set of movements, of gestures, and attitudes, the concordance of facial expressions, voices and silences" (Copeau 29-30). It is thus useful, in the light of the current state of performance criticism and developments in performance theory, to analyse sound as a material event in performance and consider its performativity. Yet the attempt of this project is not to deny or deride the importance of vision and visuality in performance but rather a considered attempt at encouraging a *listening* to performance and the consequent polytonalities that emerge. An 'auditory culture' in the disciplines of theatre and performance studies is necessary.

Sound, explained by the science of acoustics formulated as Wave Theory, is commonly understood as vibrations in the air. Medial theories of sound describe these waves as a consequence of a presence of a medium or object that has been subjected to movement. The object consequently produces vibrations and emanates waves that involve a physical movement of the air surrounding the object. Sound is thus a movement of airwaves, varying in amplitude and frequency due to the nature of the object of origin and the intensity of vibration.

This traditional scientific explanation of sound is also known as the Energy Transfer Model as it explains how sound waves, as energy, originate with a vibrating object that radiates energy to the air or through any object with which it is in contact (Truax 5).[3] According to epistemological theories of sound, sounds are monadic events happening to material events. These distal theories of sound vary from the conventional medial theories that propagate sound as vibrating airwaves. Distal theories, such as the theory of Location Event View, locate sounds at their source, and are identical with the vibration processes in it.[4] We hear the sounds therefore as both externalised and as distally located. Sound is a phenomenon produced both by the object or medium that causes a series of disruptions in the air surrounding it and the disruptions themselves. Changes in pressure cause alterations in wave patterns understood in terms of amplitude and frequency.

Regardless of the contested schools of thought in the science of sound studies, and in spite of its denial of a visualisation and/or sighting and any physical manifestation as material form / object, sound theorists believe that "the production of sound is [...] a material event, taking place in space and time" (Altman 18). Sound is immanent and counter-transcendent. In a performance event, such as theatre, the material event can consequently be considered as performative for sound performs the signification extra-textual to itself while locating itself as a material object that produces the sonic event then received by the listening ear. It is, as Rick Altman propounds in his study of the material heterogeneity of recorded sounds, "no longer sufficient to analyse a musical score or a written text to understand the effects of a particular performance" (19). One needs to examine sound as a performance event that is in itself a complex material phenomenon. When one further considers music as an aspect of sound production in performance, the performativity of music and its performance qualities need to be carefully considered for music is inherently a performance art and should thus be considered as performance.

It is appropriate, at this juncture, to consider more closely the concept of performativity. As an operative term in performance studies, 'performativity' is often used without much discursive prudence and at times in perfunctory ways. It is employed as an adjectival appendix to the term 'performance,' used simply to describe some element of the quality of performance in any event, or to denote some aspect or element of a performance. Yet, 'performativity' has a more specific linguistic and philosophical definition that has, in itself, yielded a contested discourse in the field of language and philosophy. Arguably, the term

[3] It is not the intention of this thesis to provide a comprehensive survey of the subject of acoustic theories but contextualise a definition of sound and its relation to performance.
[4] Consult the section on "Sound" in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/sounds> for a comprehensive overview of contesting theories of sound.

'performativity' was first coined and explicated by J.L. Austin in his seminal work *How To Do Things With Words*. Austin reacted against conventional grammarians and philosophers who failed to see that language was not merely used to describe or report, thereby containing merely a truth value in any utterance (which he terms a 'constative'), but that utterances and expressions could 'perform' actions. Performative utterances, a phrase that Austin uses to denote these expressions, then did not describe or express a condition (or its truth value) but enacted an event through a realisation of the phrases' 'performance.' Such expressions are thus subject to the contexts by which they are spoken 'performatively;' they actuate a reality. The infamous examples that Austin provides exemplifies how, for example, "I do (sc. Take this woman to be my lawful wedded wife) – as uttered in the course of the marriage ceremony, and "I name this ship the Queen Elizabeth" – as uttered when smashing the bottle against the stem (Austin 5), is an event or an action. They are performative statements that "[do] not describe my doing of what I should be said in so uttering to be doing or to state that I am doing it: it is to do it" (Austin 6). As such, performative utterances or, in short, 'performatives' do not yield a condition of truth and falsity but rather one of 'felicity': the failure of the performative results in an infelicitous or unhappy situation.

The distinction at times is, as Austin observes, not always clear particularly when 'performatives' are uttered in the context of a theatrical performance (and it is here, 'performativity' and 'performance' have first encounter). Austin notes, in an oft cited extract, that

> [a]s utterances, our performatives are also heir to certain other kinds of ill which infect *all* utterances ... I mean, for example, the following: 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 in ways *parasitic* upon its normal use – ways which fall under the doctrine of the etiolations of language (21-22).

Located within this dismissal of 'anomalies' in performative utterances is an assumed rejection of performativity in the context of performance; performative utterances in such circumstances are something less than (ontologically) 'real.' Austin thus distinguished (and thereby dismissed) what he termed 'non-serious utterances' – performative utterances on stage, in a poetry reading, and performing a soliloquy -- for they lacked ontological substance and were 'hollow' or 'fictional.'

For Jacques Derrida, such a distinction between fictional and non-fictional, 'serious' and 'non-serious' performatives is false. Engaging the ontological assumptions, Derrida closely examined Austin's own use of language, in "Signature, Event, Context," and further deconstructed Austin's own arguments by showing how, in that belief of fictional performatives as merely copies or replications, Austin not only invoked a moral viewpoint by dismissing theatricality and performance, but also proved how such a belief was first established on what constituted a 'normal' speech act. Thus Derrida's 'deconstructive' reading of Austin's serious / real and non-serious / fictional utterances exposed how such a division is little more than arbitrary or dogmatic for "the logic works against the implicit value judgements it has been held to underpin" (Loxley 75). Derrida's intervention subsequently engendered a contested debate with John Searle, a student of Austin who formulated Austin's ideas as a more comprehensive and formal set of Speech-Act theories, that still exists in the field of language and philosophy.

Perhaps of greater concern to theatre and performance theory, is the way in which the term 'performative' has been employed in critical discourse. The political potential of 'performativity' was first employed most significantly by Judith Butler though, recognisably, others like Derrida and Paul de Man have engaged with it in political performativities of language. In her writings that eventually culminated in the seminal text, *Gender Trouble*, Butler adapts concepts of performative utterances developed by Austin, and in particular Derrida's notions of 'iterability' in language, to formulate a theory of gender(ed) performativities. It is here that the term's quality of performance becomes socio-politically engaged. For Butler, there is nothing normative about the concept of gender or sexuality, and "our bodies cannot be understood as standing outside culture, as the ground or origin of our social identities" (Loxley 117). Gender is a performative act achieved through a repetition and reiteration of socially produced and dictated fashions and norms. As Butler describes,

> Gender reality is performative which means, quite simply, that it is real only to the extent that it is performed. It seems fair to say that certain kinds of acts are usually interpreted as expressive of a gender core or identity, and these acts either conform to an expected gender identity or contest expectation in some way. That expectation, in turn, is based upon the perception of sex, where sex is understood to be the discrete and factic datum of primary sexual characteristics [...]. This implicit and popular theory of acts and gestures as expressive of gender suggests that gender itself is something prior to the various acts, postures, and gestures by which it is dramatised and known; indeed, gender appears to the popular imagination as a substantial core which might well be understood as the spiritual or psychological correlate of

> biological sex. If gender attributes, however, are not expressive but performative, then these attributes effectively constitute the identity they are said to express or reveal ("Performative Acts" 528).

If gender is little more than performative, then such a performance inevitably obscures and obfuscates any stable notion of gender that further results in contradictions or paradoxes of performances of gender. The reinscription of these social performative acts creates a narrative further sustained by "the tacit collective agreement to perform, produce, and sustain discrete and polar genders as cultural fictions obscured by the credibility of those productions – and the punishments that attend not agreeing to believe in them" (Butler, "Performative Acts" 522). The performance of gender thus accentuates its performativity for in its performativity a discursive production of gender is yielded and this configuration of gender discourse is violently hegemonic. Underlying Butler's views is then the belief in an absence of a gendered essence and identity. Gender is little more than a social performance: "there is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; ... identity is performatively constituted by the very "expressions" that are said to be its results" (Butler, *Gender Trouble* 25).

While Butler criticises the normalising work of power (an idea adapted from Michel Foucault's explications on sexuality and power) created by gender performatives, she recognises as well the power of performatives to produce that which is 'abnormal' through its resistance as alternatives - as conscious performatives of 'otherness.' In this way, performatives lend political efficacy to the disenfranchised and the socially marginalised. Butler further adapts Derrida's deconstruction of the distinction between serious and non-serious performative utterances (or speech acts) as she proves how 'non-serious' performatives unsettle and destabilise any 'serious' performance of gender (and here, Butler uses the popular example of performing drag). Employing Derrida's notion of iterability, Butler proves that gender acts as performatives can interrogate and displace gender norms as they are subject to repetition – there is a process of 'resignification' in repetition.[5] With each repetition there is always difference. Performing resistance, and in which the codes of performance are possible only because of iterability and repetition, can resignify social norms.

Distinctly, Butler's theories of gender performativity are predicated on ideas located in performance theory (and recognisably Butler does not quite consistently specify the difference between performance and performativity), particular those of Schechner and Turner who attempted to dissolve the margins between theatre, ritual and performance. Her research conclusions reify propositions in performance theory of the absent distinctions between 'serious' and 'non-serious' performatives and the ontological validity of distinguishing onstage

[5] See Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 189.

and offstage 'role-playing.'[6] As such, Butler has often been credited as the thinker that provided the bridge between performativity, espoused by Austin and critiqued by Derrida, and performance theory.

Returning to the concerns of sound and its performativity, the term, employed in this thesis, resembles closely Butler's adaptation of Austinian concepts. As a socio-political adaptation of what was a linguistic and philosophical discourse, Butler demonstrated the applicability of theories of speech-acts to the performance of the everyday. Likewise, this project considers the performativity of sound in its socio-cultural construction and reification. Sound is and exists, as already discussed, only as performance and in considering its mode of materiality as organised forms manifested as music, sound *is* performative. Comprehending sound/music's performativity reveals an understanding of how it expresses as it enacts culture and cultural discourse with what Austin terms 'illocutionary force' - the function that an utterance performs or the effect it achieves *in* being said. More significantly understanding the Austinian definition of performativity also permits one to comprehend the ways in which culture is engendered and is 'event' in itself through a sonic/musical 'utterance.' Culture is therefore heard in a performance of prescribed sound patterns and musical compositions; sound is a performative instrument of cultural discourses where musical scales, patterns, and processes inscribe, aurally, the location and locution of cultures. As intercultural performances employ musics of various traditions and cultural origins often intermixed with contemporary sounds and performance styles, cultural significations become multifaceted and made complex, possibly bewildering and dislocating; they become, as Butler recognises of the possibilities of gender performatives, a 'resignification.' The thesis thus seeks to investigate then the resignified performativities of intercultural sound, and examine the ways in which cultures become de-stabilised (or possibly otherwise) in this acoustic inter-mixing and exchange.

Performing Sound:
Musical Meaning and Musical Signification

While a study of sound production, its source and materiality, are important, a consideration of the reception of sound is equally, if not, more important for it is in an aural reception of sound that perceptions, reactions, and meanings are derived. Sound's arrival at the ear is the subject of study for psychoacoustics which essentially examines the chain of sonic energy transfers as the wave is transmitted from the outer ear via the eardrum to the bones of the middle ear

[6] Recognisably, the definitions of performativity and its employment in language, philosophy and performance studies extends beyond what has been briefly summarised and is beyond the scope of this thesis. For a comprehensive survey of 'performativity,' see James Loxley, *Performativity* (London: Routledge, 2007).

called ossicles (Truax 5). Psychoacoustics thus processes incoming sound waves by the auditory system to extract useful and usable information otherwise known as hearing (ibid). Yet sound perceived as isolated event is inconsequential for sound must be located in context; sound always occurs in context and is inseparable from it. A process of listening proves a more valuable approach to comprehending the social importance of sound beyond a psychoacoustic hearing. Sound is communication and thus a communicational approach to sound, as acoustician Barry Truax argues, should be adopted (11). A communicational approach should thus conceptualise and understand sound in contexts and specific environments. It is also otherwise known as a soundscape: "that environment [that] is understood by those living within it – the people who are in fact creating it" (Truax 11).[7] Sounds create a relationship between listener and environment. In performance, sound / music is contextualised within the performance environment, the physicality of the performance space, and the dramatic context which is then further overlaid with fictional environments and cultural narratives. The production, reception, and perception of sound(s) are thus renovated, transformed, and re-scribed by a (specific) performative context.

The nature of what sound / music performs, its meanings and connotations: social, cultural, or contextual, however, are that which escape neat classifications, semantic dictations, or semiotic explanations. This would, possibly, be why performance analysts, theatre scholars, or critics alike, have been unable and unwilling to engage, with depth, the soundscapes of theatre productions. Although Western musicologists have often purported to ascribe meaning to tonal patterns, chord structures, the movement and flow of harmonies and sound escape easy linguistic translations and convenient expressions. Sound, and music alike, is an elusive phenomenon often subjective in its aesthetics of reception. In any attempt to describe the experience of sound (or music), one is already 'bracketing' and abstracting it from its occurrence *as* sound for sound is 'pre-linguistic'[8] or "just before language" (Pavis, "Current" 130). Sound, as earlier mentioned, exists as sonorous sound waves travelling through space and time. It is spatio-temporal phenomenon that is radically transient. Sound, in its nature, can then be said to exist as pre-symbolic, to adapt loosely Lacanian concepts, for it is that which is instinctual and prior to the Symbolic realm of representation and language. Unlike language, performed on stage as the verbal text or comprehended as the written word (as script or play-text) enacted and embodied in the voice, sound is prior to, and beyond, linguistic expression. In our attempts to describe music, we inevitably transcribe, transpose and translate this pre-linguistic signifier into a linguistic one. In "The Grain of the Voice," Roland Barthes notes how

[7] A more thorough explanation of soundscapes and sound environments would be provided in the later sections of this chapter.

[8] Pavis uses the term 'pre-linguistic' to specifically mean a non-verbal linguistics.

language is a poor semiotic system in describing music (and by extension sound) for language can only ever translate music (and by logical extension sound) into "the poorest of linguistic categories: the adjective" (Barthes, "Grain" 179). Any attempt to describe sound is always already an act of translation and transposition onto the symbolic plane. The act of describing what is heard or what these sounds can mean become then a contamination of the phenomenological aural experience. A transcription of sound, in the form of music, as symbols on a page or graphemes on a score is an act of epistemic relocation that translates and transforms the pre-symbolic experience into a symbolic one. In that act of translation from the pre-linguistic to the linguistic lies, as Derrida most infamously purported, the realm of *différance* in which the expression of meaning – *signifiance* – in sound is lost in difference and deference.[9]

The invention of a system of musical notation is a means to capture this evanescent phenomenon in the hope of reproducing sound's enigmatic qualities for future aesthetic and listening pleasure. The notational system then becomes crucial to writing and thinking about music and sound for it is the *modus operandi* of music studies, musicology, and even ethnomusicology whose enterprise has been dominated by Western music scholars attempting to explain musical origins, compositions and functions of the ethnic Other in terms prescribed by Western musical principles. The score becomes that which renders the work performable and recognisable as an entity, and enables the work to pass through the centuries (Nattiez 71). In such a notational transcription, however, the pre-linguistic becomes a linguistic sign removed from the event of performance. Though this system is unlike the language of verbal linguistics, sound, read as score, can be considered an autonomous system of annotation. The musical score then exists as an iconic representation but it is itself not music. What exists on the page as a system of notational graphemes must be performed or *verbalised* in specific performative contexts in order for sound to exist spatio-temporally. French musicologist Robert Siohan firmly asserts that "the musical sign, which is a graphic element, is neither music, nor its reflection, but a solely mnemonic device. There is no music except in the state of sonorous manifestation" (22).[10] Bruce Horner believes that song (and music) is an excellent exemplification of how all artistic work resides in the domain of performance. Horner argues that the approach to any song must first be considered as performance, "as texts whose 'work' – even today – is completed in their performance" for all genres of music live only in performance (Horner 21). Such an understanding is not only relevant to the study of song but also sound and music for their 'liveness' is one of the key markers of the theatrical event

[9] *Différance* is first introduced by Jacques Derrida in *Speech and Phenomena and Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs* and later developed in the chapter "Différance," in *Margins of Philosophy*.
[10] I attribute a translation of this insight to Jean-Jacques Nattiez who cited Siohan in *Music and Discourse: Toward A Semiology of Music*, 71.

though such notions of 'liveness' are, admittedly, being challenged.[11] Sound / music delineates the performance event and demarcates the topography of performance as significantly as the physical space or the visual elements constructed on stage. It is perhaps in this realm of the pre-symbolic, the space where the body (of the listener) reacts to, responds, and recognises the (un)familiarity of sounds embodied either in voices, performed in the act of singing, chanting or generating sound effects, or as melodic patterns and sequences, in which sound enacts its performative power.

Sound, and music in particular, is undisputedly a vessel of communication. Music communicates meaning as musicologists, performers, and the common listener would concur with these largely being emotional states and conditions or what could be termed an 'affect'. Music is, as renowned ethnomusicologist John Blacking describes, an outward sign of human communication (Byron 31). What they communicate (the musical / extra-musical: emotional / narratological) is however less agreed upon. As Joseph P. Swain phrases aptly,

> music seems full of meaning to ordinary and often extraordinary listeners, yet no community of listeners can agree among themselves with any precision that comes close to natural language about the nature of that meaning (45).

In an attempt to universalise musical semantics, Western musicology has, among its disparate discourses, always tried to associate distinct meanings with musical form and structure, patterns and movements. Deryck Cooke's *The Language of Music* is one such classic and seminal work that is equally controversial as it is significant. Cooke desired to prove that music was expressive of emotion and that distinct tonal sequences and major-minor contradistinctions could be associated with specific emotions. For Cooke, music has a specific structure, seen in the melodic and harmonic progression of a musical composition, and should be considered a kind of language with its own specific musical vocabulary. It could represent physical objects through either direct imitation, approximate imitation or suggestion / symbolisation (3). By careful consideration of what he terms the architecture of the musical work, and understanding the vocabulary, the structure of all organised sound does express emotion. Music is "extra-musical [...] since notes, like words, have emotional connotations. To further ascertain that music most certainly evokes specific emotions, Cooke suggests that

[11] In *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatised Culture*, Philip Auslander sets out to redefine the ontological nature of 'liveness' as a theatrical event in the light of new mediatised cultures such as television which present the equally live. He purports that the romantic view of theatre being distinct from film or television, due to the quality of liveness, can be challenged. Live performance is, he believes, not independent of or immune from contamination by other mediatised forms and thus liveness cannot function as a site of cultural and ideological resistance. See p 7.

listeners who have no technical knowledge of music can possess a feeling for it and can so be said to 'understand' a piece of music. The form is apprehended as an "emotional shape" (Cooke 32). Music is thus the art form that is the "supreme expression of universal emotions" (ibid. 33.). The universality of these emotions is then reflected in the seemingly formulaic musical patterns and structures revealed in Western compositions such as those by Wagner whose music-dramas (a term Wagner protested against) were often marked by leitmotifs and dramatic highpoints that were developed in accord with the psychological and emotional needs of the action. Wagner's thematic sequences in his highly emotive and expressive music were motivated by his belief, echoing Schopenhaur's metaphysical concept of an absolute music,[12] that emotions are contained musical form and is music. In the case of Cooke, such a quest for universality has led absolutists[13] to accuse Cooke's work as a "humanist idealism, an attempt to show how a transcendent human nature expresses itself in music" (Scott 23).

Other referentialists also view music as capable of triggering external associations. Music communicates meanings that refer to the extramusical world such as actions, and concepts. Peter Kivy, developing on seminal works of music-cognitivist Eduard Hanslick,[14] attempts to establish the validity of musical expression and its intimate relation to emotive expression. Recognising that music cannot and is not expressing emotions only in such ways that the listener ascribes to it (for there is no way any generalized listener would know what the emotive conditions and state the composer was in), Kivy nevertheless believes that music can be expressive of emotions and that these expressions are valid and sound as those of formalistic descriptions of music (14). Other composers such as Leonard Bernstein have applied Chomskyian generative grammar to musical analysis in an attempt to prove that music can be understood as language that constructs distinct extra-musical responses.[15]Joseph Swain endeavoured to show how recent developments in linguistics and cognitive psychology could explain our experience of music. Like language, music possesses syntax and consequently semantics, or degrees of semantic potential that do not merely signify emotions but references shared by a particular community of listeners (65). Swain's project thus endeavours to create a

[12] Schopenhaur's metaphysics of music is one which is the highest of arts because it least represents the world of appearance and it is independent of the phenomenal world. As such he espoused notions of an aesthetics of expression rather than that of form yet both are interrelated in the support of an ideal 'absolute music.' What music expresses is not that of particular emotions but that the music is these emotions themselves in the abstract. See Hamilton, 76-78.

[13] Leonard Meyer, and scholars of music history and philosophy, use the terms 'absolutists' and 'referentialists' to refer to musicologists and music scholars who believe that musical meaning occurs only within the context of the work and in the perception of the relationships set forth within the musical work of art (absolutists) and those who subscribe to the belief that music also communicates extra-musical meanings (referentialists). See *Emotion and Meaning in Music*, chapter 1. For a comprehensive survey of the arguments in these two schools of thought, and the variations upon such distinctions, see Andy Hamilton, *Aesthetics & Music*, chapter 3.

[14] See Eduard Hanslick, *On the Musically Beautiful: A Contribution towards the Revision of the Aesthetics of Music*.

[15] See Leonard Bernstein, *The Unanswered Question: Six Talks at Harvard.*

musical discourse that would enable musicians and music scholars an ability to convey with (linguistic) precision the elusive and ineffable thing called musical experience (5). Recognising that music is *expressive of* meaning, and certainly expressive of emotion, Leonard Meyer thoroughly investigated the psychological and theoretical relationship between the listener, the perceived sound as music, and the expectation of that experience. The controversy about musical meaning and semantics is, as he believes, not one about what music communicates but a lack of clarity as to the nature and definition of meaning itself. Meyer thus explored different definitions of 'meaning' while purporting strongly that "embodied musical meaning is [...] a product of expectation" by the listener (35). Musical meaning is formed from a triadic relationship between the object or stimulus, that which the stimulus points to and that which is its consequent, and conscious observer.[16]Meaning in music is thus dynamic and fluid for there are constantly new relationships with the stimulus. Later meanings coexist in memory with earlier ones and when combined constitute the meaning of the work as a total experience (Meyer 37). Such contestations about musical syntax and semantics can also be extended to a discussion on the experience of sound since music is a form of (organised) sound.

Beyond a Musical Semiosis: A Phenomenology of Sound

Musicology, as the linguistic articulation and science of music, has since become the means by which societies attempt to comprehend, explain, translate, and reproduce sonic signatures. Despite these attempts at an objective description of sound / music and its semantic value, the subjectivity of their reception remains the root of contention. Sound is distinctly phenomenon unlike a language which is a semiotic system and one that is, according to Emile Benveniste, capable of interpreting another semiotic system.[17] Transcribing sound with a linguistic framework discounts and defers its condition as phenomenon. In other words, considering sound / music as language, while useful, inhibits one's ability to evaluate sound / music as a phenomenological experience. Additionally, such an approach to the comprehension of sound / music presents dangers of viewing musical forms as a closed system and removes the experience of a 'deep listening' –

> "an agile listening [that] involves attuning our ears to listen again to the multiple layers of meaning potentially embedded in the same sound. More than this, deep listening involves practices of dialogue and procedures for investigation, transposition and interpretation [...] [It is about] how the

[16] See Morris R. Cohen, *A Preface to Logic*, 76.
[17] See "The Semiology of Language," 228-46.

world presents itself when we *listen to* rather than *look upon* it (Bull and Beck 3-4, own italics).[18]

The experience of deep listening is akin to Clifford Geertz's concept of 'thick description'. In "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture," Geertz, borrowing a notion from Gilbert Ryle, advances the idea of thick description. Thick description, as an anthropological methodology, requires a discernment of the structures of signification or codes (Geertz 9). This discernment involves not merely explaining the signifier, which in anthropological terms refers to the gestures or behaviour, and its meaning but the meaning(fullness) in context. It is a contextual (social, cultural, historical, political) framework that gives meaning to any observed behaviour. A deep listening can thus be said to be a listening beyond 'thinness' (the sounds, genre, and/or emotional association) and a listening in cultural and performative contexts. It is a listening, as opposed to a hearing, to sounds which engender consequently a 'thickness' of interpretation.

Musicological analysis transcribes and translates the musical phenomena through a visualisation of organised sounds and a semiotic reconstruction as score. In addition, traditional musicology, as acoustic phenomenologist F. Joseph Smith notes, "has explained sound in terms of speculation that has depended completely on visual metaphor. This becomes even more obvious in the study of musical aesthetics, in which structures and terms are borrowed wholesale from the visual arts. And yet music is not a visual art; it is audial" (Smith F.J. 40). A conscious act of (deep) listening would then accord sound / music its place as aural phenomena. It would encourage a comprehension of sound / music as performance events and not merely static signifiers on page. It would allow, as Smith believes, the phenomenon to 'speak' for itself, to "reveal itself to us, as it is, i.e. phenomenologically, rather than as we categorise it" (15). There is a need to recognise sound / music, in performance, as phenomenological experiences, experiences of the body that transcend the mind-body dichotomy in a synthesis of listening. Studies of sound / music in performance should, consequently, adopt a phenomenological attitude and a phenomenological attitude is one of *listening* and one of *sound* and *hearing* (Smith F.J. 17, 19).

In *Great Reckonings in Little Rooms: On the Phenomenology of Theater*, Bert O. States calls for an analysis of theatre employing theories of phenomenology. Raising the problems of dissecting the theatrical spectacle via semiotics, which inevitably leads to a fragmentation of the theatrical experience and the misplaced perceptual impression of the spectator, States calls for a phenomenological explanation one that is bordered on, and constructed from, the sensory

[18] Phenomenologist F. Joseph Smith also believes that narrow definitions of the musicological discipline locks and closes the potential of the field, confining the subject, particularly its interdisciplinary fusion.

perceptions of the viewer / audience for a "linguistic approach to theatre is one that is apt to look past the site of our sensory engagement with its empirical objects" (7). He firmly believes that semiotics, as a tool for performance analysis, addresses the theatre merely as a system of codes and inevitably "dissects the perceptual impression theatre makes on the spectator" (7). States is thus interested in the ways that elements in performance can be comprehended in a 'pre-significative' or 'pre-linguistic' phase prior to systems of theatrical codes and signs. Furthermore, theatre semiotics establishes, in its attempt at theorising and decoding meaning in the performance event, an "imperialistic confidence in its product: that is, its implicit belief that you have exhausted a thing's interest when you have explained how it works as a sign" (ibid.). In accordance with States' views, phenomenologist Stanton B. Garner subscribes to the belief that phenomenology allows the world to reveal and disclose itself to the perceiving subject and "to pursue the thing as it is given to consciousness in direct experience [...] to return perception to the fullness of its encounter with its environment" (2). Because theatre is foremost a 'live' event that presents real bodies on stage and engages with vitality and corporeality, it is an appropriate site for a phenomenological understanding. Phenomenology's primary concern is with

> the engagement in lived experience between the individual consciousness and the real which manifests itself not as a series of linguistic signs but as sensory and mental phenomena – the 'world' as encountered in perception and reflection rather than the 'earth' as things in themselves (Fortier 29).

This phenomenological approach to theatre stems from the sensorial-bodily phenomenological theories of Maurice Merleau-Ponty. In *The Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty, critiquing the tradition of Husserlian transcendental phenomenology, writes of the need for a corporeal foundation in perception where all consciousness is perceptual consciousness. Semiotics lends itself to a dualistic structure of the perceiver and the perceiving object, sense and perception. Yet, as Merleau-Ponty points out, this dualistic Cartesian dichotomy resultant from the belief in the fragmentation of mind and body is false for "the real is a closely woven fabric" (x) between consciousness and sensations. Analytic reflection does provide an experience of reality. It views the world as a subjective synthesis. Yet "to perceive is to render oneself present to something through the body" (Merleau-Ponty, *Primacy* 42). Phenomenology, as a study of essences in perception, is then one of a "lived bodiliness" (Garner 28). In Merleau-Ponty's own description,

> perception is not a science of the world, it is not even an act, a deliberate taking up of a position; it is background from which all acts stand out, and is presupposed by them. The world is not an object such that I have in my

> possession the law of its making; it is the natural setting of, and field for, all my thoughts and all my explicit perceptions. Truth does not 'inhabit' only the 'inner man,' or more accurately, there is no inner man, man is in the world, and only in the world does he know himself (*Phenomenology* x-xi)

Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, more evidently rooted in the Heideggerian tradition, is thus a call for phenomenology to "return to things themselves [...] to return to that world which precedes knowledge, of which knowledge always speaks (*Phenomenology* ix). In addition this return must attempt to subvert and eradicate the dichotomies of mind and body. A bodily phenomenology advances while subverting the Husserlian concepts of the *noema* (object-as-it-is, object as-it-is-intended) and *noesis* (object as product of intentional consciousness) by refiguring their juxtaposed positions. The object is as much as it is the conscious intentionality that prescribes its is-ness. Likewise, to return to the classical Cartesian dichotomy, the mind is as corporeal and the body is not merely what is physical. Such a phenomenological attitude allows the establishment of a new hermeneutics to both the theatrical phenomena and the experience of sound for it possibly overcomes the problems of atomising the theatrical spectacle, and the experience of it, into minimal and splintered units.

In the chapter "The Body as Expression, and Speech," Merleau-Ponty further argues that

> [a]esthetic expression confers on what it expresses an existence in itself, installs as a thing perceived and accessible to all, or conversely plucks the signs themselves – the person of the actor, or the colours and canvas of the painter – from their empirical existence and bears them off into another world (183).

The 'things' themselves therefore grant them meaning. Likewise, music, to experience it phenomenologically, is a presentation of a unique event and is not notes inscribed on a page which further designate sounds. Music and the meaning of music are the sounds themselves. In that way "[t]he meaning swallows up the signs" (Merleau-Ponty 183). As such, "[o]ne cannot adequately describe music or express its verbal equivalent, but only attempt to share impressions: music is the experience of sound" (Kimbrough 112).

In a bid to encourage a phenomenology of listening, Smith believes that sound and music studies need to unsubscribe from discourses that subject them to spatialisation and visualisation and allow the reality of sound to speak / sound for itself. Thus a "truly phenomenological attitude is one of listening" (Smith, F.J. 17) for sound does affect the bodily and the sensational. It is a way of "seizing reality with all our body" (Gonzalez-Crussi 45). The sensing of sound through the process of listening engages sensations and emotions due to the

coordination of brain, nervous system, head, ear, chest, muscles, respiration, and breathing (Feld, "Waterfalls" 97). Listening is thus a phenomenological experience and a phenomenology of listening – Akoumenology – needs to be established.

Basing his theories of Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger's phenomenological theories, Don Ihde proposes a first and second phenomenology to sound. In an inquiry to what he aligns as a Husserlian-styled first phenomenology, and a subsequent approximation of a Heideggerian existential phenomenology, Ihde seeks, in *Listening and Voice*, to establish an existential philosophy of auditory experience (Ihde, *Listening and Voice*20). Sound is, for Ihde and Merleau-Ponty, a bodily experience for it permeates and penetrates the bodily being (ibid. 45). To listen phenomenologically, one needs not only to effect a 'deep listening,' a concentrated attention on the sound and on the process of listening, but also become aware of the presence and pervasiveness of 'beliefs' which might disturb the act of listening in itself since listening begins by being bodily global in its effects (ibid. 49, 45). It is about listening to what is yet unheard as much as that which is heard in a process of deconstructing the prevailing beliefs about the sound experienced (ibid. 49).

A phenomenology of sound (as both acoustic and auditory experience) proves useful, then, in the encounters with sound / music in intercultural performance for sounds are appropriated and adapted from a variety of cultural sources as well as time periods in a collusive interplay of polyvocalities and polytonalities that confound straightforward musicological analyses. Ihde's abstract theories are useful in an acute listening to an acoustic interculturalism for what is heard in cultural sounds excavate the unheard – the cultural negotiations, interventions and tussles heard as acoustic experiences. Listening, Ihde poignantly notes, "makes the invisible present" (*Listening and Voice*51). Likewise, in exploring the acoustic world of early modern England, Bruce Smith proposes a paradigm shift to one of a phenomenological listening in cultural context:

> We need a psychology of listening. Since knowledge and intentions are shaped by culture, we need to attend also to cultural differences in the construction of aural experience [...] We need a phenomenology of listening, which we can expect to be an amalgam of *biological constants and cultural variables* (*Acoustic World* 8. Own italics).

A phenomenology of listening is thus not antithetical to a 'culturalisation' of sound. While such a phenomenological listening encourages an attuned awareness of the bodily reactions and actions in response to sound and music, it is not a transcultural and transhistorical perception. Listening, inherently, "is a directed, learned activity: it is a definite cultural practice" (Sterne 19). An interior auditory experience is a cultural phenomenon.

Intercultural productions, both Western and Asian in origin, often exploit performance traditions of Asia – both theatrical and musical – be it as an act of looking across cultural borders or seeking a cultural past to (re)create the intercultural mise en scène. A semiologically-based Western musicological framework though useful is thus inadequate in interpreting such sounds that have not been structured akin to Western music. The differing tonalities, modalities, and compositional philosophy (often religious and spiritual in origin) lend themselves poorly to musicological descriptions. As F. Joseph Smith notes, "it is perhaps in facing non-western music that the musicologist feels the inadequacy of his traditional categories" (41). Furthermore, the dynamics of this new aural experience, that involve intersections and hybridisations of traditional and modern sounds, variegated acoustic experiences and sonic productions of Asian music, in intercultural performance, defy singular and totalising frameworks of analysis. Yet the 'soundtracks' in these performances do affect the audience-listener phenomenologically.[19] Performative function and meaning can be derived from an akoumenological study of sound in addition to other frameworks of analysis. The listener-audience imbibes the sonic experience and enters within the sonic phenomenon, hears and reacts to the adapted and/or hybridised sounds that could confound, while gesturing at multiple cultural codes, histories, and significations. A phenomenology of acoustic experience thus proves useful in enabling the audience-listener to envisage a vocabulary for describing the musical encounter as experience rendered through the aural sense.

The Acoustic Environment and Sound(scapes)

The phenomenological experience of sound in performance can also be described as a soundscape for sound, as many acousticians believe, create acoustic spaces. Developed by communications theorists at Simon Fraser University in the late 1970s to denote the function of sound in human perceptual ecology, the term soundscape has its roots in the word landscape. First described by R. Murray Shafer, in his seminal work *The Tuning the World* (1977), a soundscape can best be described as an acoustic environment, or an environment of sound. It is an auditory 'terrain' that maps the composition of noises, sounds, music and human melodies in a particular space and context.[20] However, soundscapes should not be misunderstood as landscapes of sound for landscapes are objective entities existing 'out there.' A soundscape is, contrarily, as Wes Folkerth describes, specifically situated at the interface between the 'out there' and the perceiving subject's involvement in its constitution (15). It is

[19] This idea will be further expounded on in later sections of the chapter.
[20] Stephen Feld, in "Waterfalls of Song," provides a comprehensive history of the development of the term 'soundscape'. See 94 – 96.

not altogether synonymous with the 'acoustic environment' but instead denotes "how the individual and society as a whole understand the acoustic environment through listening" (Truax xii). There is thus, in some way, a synthesis of the object experience and the subjective perceiver from which a soundscape is conceived and comprehended.

In an attempt to ingrain a culture of listening as (aural) perception as opposed to ocular perception, theories of soundscape facilitate an understanding of the creation of a sense of spatiality and locale through sound / music. Sound does derive existence and corporeality in a space (temporality), and as material event, where context and environment determine the experience. A different hermeneutic framework must be applied to the comprehension of a shrill scream in a performance moment and one heard on a quiet street. Interpretation remains at the heart of hermeneutics and interpretation requires context. Sound, consequently, can be said to derive meaning only in context. Listening is then not simply acoustic sensation, but the process by which acoustic information is processed and rendered meaningful to us, by us, in context (Folkerth 15). It is, as Truax states, "the interlocking behaviour of sound, the listener and the environment as a system of relationships, not as isolated entities" (xii). Sound is a communicative process that creates a context for those who 'live' within it, create it and understand it. Information is exchanged thus in context that involves a tripartite interaction of the produced sound, listener, and the environment (Truax 9-11). The degree to which a given listener is acquainted with the source of a particular sound, or to individual elements of the soundscape more generally, is often an index of that person's position in, or relation to, the larger community (context). While an akoumenological framework can be used to comprehend the 'meaningfulness' of sounds as they are on the intercultural stage, it is also necessary, where applicable, to examine sounds in (cultural) contexts. Sound is thus predicated on a 'cultural listening' and culture determines the sense, value and meaning of these sonic vibrations. Sound demarcates cultural boundaries and can often resound with cultural signification.

"Listening habits create a relationship between the individual and the environment, whether interactive and open-ended, or oppressive and alienating" (Truax xii). By analysing the soundscape of an intercultural production, one can thus best understand the ways sound works to demarcate or possibly dissolve cultural boundaries – of what is familiar and foreign, recognizable and alienating. In addition, sound / music can also create new culture-scapes that are animated by sound. The engendering effects of such possibly colliding, contesting, and

collusive meanings of culture, through a phenomenological reception of intertwined cultural sounds, is among the questions this dissertation interrogates: how do intercultural performances reconfigure, redefine, and re-scribe cultural sounds in performance? What do

these sounds become in this adaptation, interaction, synthesis, and hybridity? How is cultural signification, imperative in sound, interrogated and newly identified?

To further add to the complexities of theoretical considerations, sound, as philosopher Roger Scruton suggests, is event and not substance. It therefore occupies the space of an other; "a sound world is inherently other" (13) for unlike material objects that can be seen and felt, we are unable to inhabit the space of sound. We cannot 'belong' to it for it is metaphysically apart. Sound redefines the notion of 'physical' space for it introduces metaphysical concepts of spatial dimension.[21] The acoustic experience, as Scruton suggests, offers a world of objects which are ordered in space only *apparently*, and not in *fact* (14). The interactivity between the 'apparent' and the 'factual', and the liminality between sound and sight, proves a curious engagement in performance since performance is dependent on the materiality of what is seen and heard. One can further make pertinent Scruton's notions of space as an 'inherently other' (or othered-space) by considering culturally defined sounds which further extend, accentuate and intensify this acoustic otherness. If sound / music is othered-space (and here soundscape studies affirm the notion of acoustic environments distinct from, or in conflict with, visual spaces (Shafer 214)), and if sound / music in intercultural performances inevitably and necessarily trigger cultural associations, the soundscapes of such performances can consequentially be said to be a confrontation of doubled-otherness existing in the interstitial 'space' between the 'out there' and the audience / listener.

Akin to the concept of soundscapes is the field of acoustemology – a term coined by anthropologist Steven Feld to denote the specific relations between acoustic experience and epistemology in the establishment of personal and cultural identity. It is one of the ways that the acoustic densities in intercultural performance can be accessed. In the tradition of Merleau-Ponty's corporeal phenomenology, Feld created the term as a means to describe the sense of place and the place of senses in the Kaluli people's experience and expression of the tropical rainforest in Papua New Guinea. For Feld, sound could denote specific local conditions, knowledge and imagination embodied in the culturally particular sense of place ("Waterfalls" 91). It is as much a phenomenology of listening as it is the experience of the materiality of space from the act of listening. Acoustemology is then a means of

> [...] an exploration of sonic sensibilities, specifically of the ways in which sound is central to making sense, to knowing, to experiential truth. This seems particularly relevant to understanding the interplay of sound and felt balance in the sense and sensuality of emplacement, of making place [...]

[21] One can here relate Scruton's ideas to concepts of 'Soundscape' which will be discussed in the subsequent pages of this chapter.

> Acoustemology means that as a sensual space-time, the experience of place potentially can always be grounded in an acoustic dimension (Feld, "Waterfalls" 97).

While soundscapes depict and describe the acoustic environment and the listener's engagement and constitution of that environment, acoustemology is the theoretical process behind the construction of a soundscape. The listener-receiver constitutes the spatial dimension in a simultaneous interchange with the sounds that are heard. Sound has dimensionality as much as it creates dimensionality for sound can be heard 'moving' in various directions, and can also be heard in trajectories of ascent, descent and other undulating forms (Feld, "Waterfalls" 98). The value of recognising an acoustic space is then a movement toward an "acoustic knowing, of sounding as a condition of and for knowing, of sonic presence and awareness as potent shaping forces in how people make sense of experiences" (ibid.).

Studies of soundscapes form, also, a particular field of ethnomusicological studies in particular research concerned with "embodiment, emplacement and sense of place" (Post 9). Such a study is intrinsically concerned with cultural identity and the ways they are encoded and enacted. Feld's research is a study not merely of the relations between sound and place or "how the ecology of natural sounds is central to a local musical ecology, and how this musical ecology maps onto the rainforest environment" (Feld, "From Ethnomusicology") but also of the acoustic-identity relations between the Kaluli people and the Papua New Guinean rainforest as acoustic environment. Such a field of ethnomusicology, prevalent only in the late 20th century beginning with the work of Martin Stokes[22] and, as previously mentioned, R. Murray Schafer, is a valuable discourse for it explores the "encoding and enacting of identities in historical, social, and geographical contexts as they consider place and space, body and music, and the embodiment of ideas and issues in music and dance, musical instruments, and performance practice" (Post 9).

Soundscape studies, with its roots in an ethnomusicological discourse, would prove beneficial for the study of an acoustic interculturalism for such a study would seek to deliberate on the fundamental ways in which cultural sounds can evoke specific spaces in performance – historical, cultural, mythical or otherwise – through an acoustic experience (of deep listening). If sounds are, hypothetically, able to demarcate cultural identities and spaces, the polyphonies and multi-vocalities engendered in the inter-mixing, layering, and fusion of these sounds could create possibly bewildering heterotopic and dislocative spaces in which this thesis would seek to explore. The issue of these auditory spaces becomes complicated and

[22] See Martin Stokes, *Ethnicity, Identity and Music: The Musical Construction of Place* (1994).

problematised when contemporary sounds evocative of a modernised technological soundscape are used alongside distinctive ethnic sounds.

The Culture of Sounds and The Sounds of Culture

(The experiencing of) Sound(s), evidenced from studies of soundscapes and acoustemology, is culturally determined and in a symbiotic relationship. Sound inscribes culture aurally while culture attunes a community to distinct acoustic experiences. Tonalities (and atonalities) are determined by a cultural community with a shared ear. According to Levi-Strauss, culture is present in the musical expression and there can be no natural expression as such (22). Likewise, Shepherd and Giles-Davies believe that

> meaning is not immanent to the musical text itself [...] Conversely, meaning is not completely arbitrary in its relationship to the musical text as defined. It is not something that is externally visited upon the text regardless of the text's inherent qualities. Meaning, in any situation, is thus a consequence of an intense dialectical interaction between text, other adjacent texts (lyrics, images, movement) and social, cultural and biographical contexts. The different intentionalities that producers and consumers bring to bear on musical practices are specific to concrete conjunctures of social, cultural, and biographical processes (218).

Culture is thus deeply rooted in sound and sound in culture. Unlike the ways in which Western musicologists have propounded, there is no inherent or immanent meaning in (organised) sound. It is purposeless to interrogate the intrinsic meaning of a single tone / sonic signature or a series of tones and signatures for as physical existences they are meaningless. They become meaning, as Leonard Meyer notes, "only in so far as they point to, indicate, or imply something beyond themselves" (34). Thus signification in sound / music is culturally specific. Acoustic / musical meaning is derived from, and within, cultural contexts (or cultural soundscapes). As George H. Mead observes about the establishment of a concept of meaning,

> the relationships existing between the tones themselves or those existing between the tones and the things they designate or connote, though a product of cultural experience, are real connections existing objectively in culture (76).

Sound / music and its consequent 'meaning' is derived in a cultural environment as much as it aurally delineates culture and corporealises that which is located acoustically. Any study of sound / music must thus be situated, imperatively, in a cultural context for "cultural

products [emotions] are reproduced in individuals in the form of embodied experience" (Abu-Lughod and Lutz 12). Feld appends concepts of performance to this view when he asserts how while "emotions can be created in discourse, [its] social creation is contingent on performance, which is always emergent through embodied voices" ("Waterfalls" 97). Feld privileges, as does this thesis, a performance of sound where its derivative meaning is cultural context.

The exploration of culturally 'Other' (to Western ears) musics have been a fascination and concern in the disciplines of composition and ethnomusicology, from the late nineteenth century to much of the twentieth. Contemporary experimental composers such as Henry Cowell, Lou Harrison and John Cage, among others, found in the East tones, scales and forms that were foreign (and fascinating) to Western principles of listening and composing. They believed, with deep humanist convictions, that the adaptation and incorporation of 'Oriental' sounds could enrich and enliven Western music and consequently create new 'global' (hybrid) forms.[23] Prior to these twentieth century composers, others such as Claude Debussy, were enchanted by the sonic quality of these 'Other' musical. At the 1889 Paris Universal Exposition, the young Debussy was captivated by the microtonal reverberations and rhythmic intricacies of Javanese Gamelan music. His encounter with sounds of the East became the inspiration that led to the composition of "Nocturnes" (1899) and "Pagodes" (from *Estampes*, 1903) - a piece that emulated Javanese gamelan-like heterophonic texture.[24]

Much of these composers' enchantment with the (sonic) East is underscored by an Orientalist 'romance,' one not so different from those of Western theatre interculturalists. Because music, and its performance, is inherently a signifier of cultural difference, the sounds of the 'Other' have consistently been regarded as (re)source for appropriation and re-presentation. The presence of such diversity and difference have also prompted Western composers to locate underlying 'universal' structures in music in their desire to revolutionise and reinvigorate music paradigms. Yet such a desire is fuelled by an Orientalist desire to excavate and exploit by means of forwarding a (Western) universalist trope. Debussy's infamous description of Javanese gamelan sounds as "moonlight and water" reveals the subjectivisation of ethnic and culturally-other sounds to a distinctly Western visual metaphor. Views such as those put forth by Mantle Hood reveal a Western desire to essentialise Other(ed) sounds and music, heard and 'perceived' from a Western ear. The experience of the individual in society permits a universal explanation for why "Western and non-Western students of world music, as well as lay audiences [are] deeply moved by the beauty of such pieces as

[23] A brief discussion of the works of Harrison, Cowell and Cage can be found in Chapter 5.
[24] It should be noted that while the principles of gamelan music have been adopted loosely by Debussy, he had never intentionally made use of any gamelan scales in his composition.

'Kojuna Ha' in Japanese Gagaku, the G Minor Symphony by Mozart, and the 'Rambu' played by a Javanese gamelan Sekati" (Hood 286).

In many ways distinct from composition yet oftentimes subscribing to the same Orientalist romance, the discipline of ethnomusicology attempts to cultivate the understanding of cultural 'difference' in music. Ethnomusicology seeks to comprehend cultural sounds with a framework of cultural musicology.[25] It is, as Bruno Nettl describes, first and foremost a "study of music in culture" (12) and, according to Helen Myers, a "study of music in its cultural context – the anthropology of music" (3). As academic discourse, the discipline has often sought to satiate the desire, while in the course of ethnographising and documenting various musical forms and acoustic phenomena in 'Other' cultures particularly those that do not conform, abide by or respect principles of Western musical structure, to speak (musically) for the Other. Early twentieth century (circa the post-enlightenment period) ethnomusicology has been, like Western intercultural performances that appropriate and exoticise 'foreign' cultures, idealistically humanistic and, at times, brazenly imperialistic. It often involved an anthropological excavation of sounds / music in foreign cultures and a subsequent transcription of these sounds into Western musical patterns and principles (such as the musical scale degrees, pitch-classes and tempo). In *Music and the Racial Imagination*, Ronald Radano and Philip Bohlman note that the beginnings of ethnomusicology were a consequence of, and a reaction to, European expansionism in the 16 and 17 centuries. Such ventures into spaces of Otherness led to encounters with 'Other' sounds that further resulted in a racialisation of these acoustics. Attempts at inscribing, describing and representing such acoustic Otherness often made synonymous notions of race and music. The modern discipline of ethnomusicology was established as a desire to comprehend this complex relationship while removing racial matters from what the discipline saw as a discourse that could be scientifically objective. Practising a new 'cultural relativism' established by the work of Franz Boas, ethnomusicology sought to provide for music studies the "outlines of a new Enlightenment Project" (Radano and Bohlman 23) that would liberate music from racial ideology. Yet, as Radano and Bohlman observe, "these calls, however laudable, also revealed a new kind of imperialism consistent with America's world dominance" (ibid.).[26] While it was ethnomusicology's intent to 'deracinate' race from music, racial attitudes and cultural prescriptions prevailed in its attempts to 'scientifically' explain cultural sounds.

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[25] Helen Myers provides a comprehensive overview, in the introductory section, of the definitions, origins of the term, and approaches to ethnomusicology taken in the 20th century. See Myers, *Ethnomusicology: An Introduction*.

[26] See "Introduction" in Radano and Bohlman for a more detailed historical recount of the relationship between race and music.

Early ethnomusicological studies may have been about an appropriation of foreign sounds by a Western musical language yet, recognisably, there have been attempts to recognise musical intersubjectivity and the ways in which music is culturally rooted and socially enacted. The ways in which people express an emotion or idea through music is culturally embedded. The writings of ethnomusicologist John Blacking are an exemplification of such attempt. Based on his study of the music of the Venda people in South Africa, Blacking believes musical meaning is distinctly culture bound and that musical communication is specifically located socially and culturally. In other words, the extra-musical connotations of music are subjected to cultural and social locations. "[T]he most elementary musical structures are humanly 'significant forms' that have been created and assigned some meaning in culture" (Byron 36). He echoes musicologist's Norman Cazden's view when he cites how consonance and dissonance are simple learned responses, adaptations to an existing pattern of the social group.[27] Despite a recognition of the social and cultural imperative that determines musical meaning Blacking advocates a universal musical form underlying the extra-musical. There can be, for him, a universal language of music for music is "humanly organised sound" (Byron 55). Deeply humanistic, the commonality that is 'humankind' guarantees an accessible structure by which to describe all musics. There are, according to Blacking, four types of musical communication, guaranteeing particularised responses, that underlie all societies.[28] Such possible responses can occur only because there are certain "universal musical processes (such as theme and variation, melodic inversion, etc) at work" (Blacking 46). The most efficacious use of music is, for Blacking,

> [t]he education of human emotions, the attainment of ownership of the senses, and the expansion of consciousness and social relations [...] the whole point of understanding music as music is that we carry in our bodies the cognitive equipment to transcend cultural boundaries and resonate at the common level of humanity (15).

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[27] See Norman Cazden, "Musical Consonance and Dissonance: A Cultural Criterion," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 4: 3-11.

[28] The four principles are as follows: firstly, when the ideal motion of music (i.e. it rhythm) and/or its tone-stress is perceived in relation to cultural experience, and hence as an exciting stimulus, it may induce a purely physical state in a listener by portraying motor impulse and/or nervous tension. Next, if, as a result of cultural experience, a musical pattern has come to be regarded as a sign of a social situation or is accompanied by words that specify or recall a social situation, its performance may announce social situations, recall certain feelings, and even reinforce social values. If a certain pattern of sound, of tone-stress combined with ideal motion is associated in a culture with a social situation and hence with the meanings that the situation has to individuals, it may be selected and musically developed in order to heighten the emotional affect of words or of a state programme. Lastly, even if it has neither words, a stated programme, nor any apparent connection with social life except by its performance by people, music may express ideas about aspects of society and convey to its audiences various degrees of consciousness of experience. See Byron 38-46.

Ethnomusicologist Michael Tenzer, known for his research in Balinese music, opined about the importance of ethnomusicology as his discourse reverberates with Blacking's views when he interrogates the possibility of analysing music independent of its political, geographical, or cultural distance from the analyst and the reader. Tenzer acknowledges the cultural and ideological influence on music and musical meaning but firmly believes that "there is a moment in analysis at which we must curtail our penchants for modernist universalism, postmodern irony, or other language-based responses in order to confront music as elementally as possible" (5). *Analytical Studies in World Music* (2006) is Tenzer's attempt to gather ethnomusicologists in a project to excavate the universal structures of 'world' music for there exists "a simple unified perspective on music structure that may enable closer comparisons and the formulation of common principles" (ibid.).

While this thesis purports that much of early Western ethnomusicology has been, in its early beginnings, an imperialistic venture of dissecting ethnic sounds / music with tools of Western origin (crafted for a Western ear and produced to reinforce an occidental *Weltanschauung*), the contribution ethnomusicologists have made to the historicisation and documentation of 'foreign' sounds from remote cultures cannot be discounted. It remains the most competent and accessible approach to understanding 'Other' sounds to date. Furthermore, the discipline has, since Said's commanding influence on various areas of cultural studies, adopted a more critical framework and self-conscious perspective in analysing and discussing the music of the Other. It has, as academe, allowed for the study and understanding of cultural variation and varieties of sound / music types facilitated by a common vocabulary, not in the desires to establish a 'universal' language but an exploration of diversity and difference in sounds. Most notably, ethnomusicologists such as Bruno Nettl and Charles Seeger have taken more critical positions by considering the ethics of ethnomusicological fieldwork and the cultural positions of ethnomusicologists as ethnographers of sound. Charles Seeger, a pioneer in the field of musicology and an internationally influential scholar-musician, was particularly concerned about the social responsibilities of the musicologist and, by extension, the ethnomusicologist. Of the many contributions Seeger made to the fields of composition, the philosophy of music, music education, applied musicology and ethnomusicology, Seeger believed deeply in the value and

representation of folk music (particularly in America). He published many articles on the subject of music and the composer in a class society and sought solutions from Marxist-oriented theories. Before the establishment of ethnomusicology as a recognised discipline, circa 1953, Seeger was among the earliest music philosophers to emphasise the need for

contextualising music socially and privileging traditional and folk sounds as equals of Western art music.[29]

In some ways similar to Seeger, Bruno Nettl remains one of the most influential figures in ethnomusicology. His most notable work, *The Study of Ethnomusicology: Thirty-One Issues and Concepts* – a revised work first published in 1983, confronts issues of 'difference,' power relations, ethics, minority representation and diasporic sounds. In the text, Nettl interrogates with critical reflection the discourse of ethnomusicology and its process as a comparative study of musics. In the act of transcription and comparison, the politics of cultural representation, and the relative cultural-political positions of the ethnomusicologist, are inevitably exposed; questions of universals (and non-universals) are engendered. Reacting against nineteenth and early twentieth century Western ethnocentrism, Nettl insists that the concept of universals, as an equation with Western art music, was not the task of ethnomusicology. For Nettl, "each culture and each music must be understood first and foremost in its own terms" (14). Music is then "not the universal language, but musics are not as mutually unintelligible as languages [...] they are more readily connected with each other, and also more readily understood in certain respects, by foreigner or novice, than are true languages" (49).

Nettl's seminal work, as a text of authority in ethnomusicology, has since charted new directions and appreciations for the study of the music of other cultures. Consequently, the contributions of ethnomusicology prove useful in the analysis of interculturalism on stage for it provides a 'language' to describe, account, and investigate the interaction, intersections and interplay of diverse ethnic sounds in performance. To derive sonic sensibilities of what are possibly 'foreign' sounds to 'local' ears, there needs a language of analysis. Ethnomusicology, with its study of instrumentation, form, acoustic principles, and religious contexts, permits the investigation of an acoustic interculturalism for without which there lacks an objective and accessible mode by which to establish a discourse of traditionally ethnic sounds that have become, in this globalised pop-cultural world, 'foreign' and 'Other.'

Establishing an Acoustic Interculturalism

Though much has been studied on ethnic sounds and music in the field of ethnomusicology, there is a distinct absence of a theory of acoustic interculturalism specifically of the ways in which sound resonates with cultural forms, practices, codes and beliefs, and inscribes, identifies, distinguishes, and possibly dissolves differences in performance. The thesis seeks

[29] It is not possible to consider the significance and impact of Seeger in this thesis. For a deeper understanding of Charles Seeger and his contributions, see *Understanding Charles Seeger*, eds. Bell Yung and Helen Rees (United States of America: U of Illinois, 1999) and Taylor Aitken Greer, *Charles Seeger's Philosophy of Music* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1998).

then to capitalise on this current necessity by studying the *performativity* of sound (and music) as phenomena, or what can be regarded as the soundscape in intercultural performance. A study of sound could facilitate an attuned understanding of cultural negotiations (hybridization and/or contestation) established (or not) by the visual spectacle while appreciating the performative function(s) of sound in the larger discourse of Interculturalism. In so doing, it is hoped that the thesis would pioneer a new area in intercultural performance analysis by developing questions that would encourage a "cultural poetics of listening" (Smith, B.R. 8) – the counter-points, harmonics, and polytonalities of intercultural modulations – and the ways in which the experience of sound, as performative instance, can evince new critical questions on intercultural performance practices. A new theatrical praxis can be established when we comprehend the intercultural on stage as material event that is necessarily *heard* as it is to be *seen*. Bull and Beck aptly phrase such a necessary motivation when they state how

> [a]uditory space has no point of favoured focus, wrote D.C. Williams in 1955. It is a space in which multiple registers can co-exist simultaneously [...] Thinking with sound and music may offer the *opportunity for thinking through issues of inclusion, coexistence and multicultural in a more humane way and allow us to think through what a multicultural landscape might sound like* in the age of information and global interdependency. (Bull and Beck 15. Own italics)

By analysing the soundscape of an intercultural production, one can thus best understand the ways sound works to interrogate cultural boundaries. Often, music and sound are used in performance to accentuate mood and atmosphere and manipulate emotional reactions to a specific scene or dramatic event. In intercultural performances however this auditory authority wanes for in the hybridity of cultural sounds, what is communicated becomes less certain and the 'meanings' of such an aural experience become complicated and bewildering. Sound and music, as a site of cultural specificity encompassed within a larger discourse of culture itself, can produce a foreign experience and demarcate temporal and cultural Otherness. Sound / Music invites an identification or abjection of cultural positions acoustically since, as it was earlier introduced, (distinct) sounds can be identified with particular national cultures and cultural traditions. The effect of such contesting aural metonymies of culture on the intercultural stage is what the dissertation seeks to elucidate. A new intercultural hermeneutics could thus be established from such an approach to analysing intercultural performance and its (geo-political) theorisation.

The discussion of an acoustic interculturalism would be approached from three performative vectors:[30] the performance of music and song, the singing/speaking/chanting voice in performance, and the rhythms of performance (as dramaturgical strategy of structuring performance and as percussive rhythms generated by instruments employed).

In the analysis of music, the tunes (both song and incidental music) employed in the performance would be carefully considered. Music, here defined as organised sounds occurring in a temporal sequence and expressed in terms of pitch, melody and harmony, rhythm (tempo and metre), and tonal quality (timbre, articulation, dynamics and texture), in the performative context, either as essential and composite to the narrative / plot or as insertions of interludes, constitute the mise en scène. By establishing a phenomenology of listening and devising an akoumenological discourse in theatre and performance, the musical text can be further understood as integral and essential lines of action. Such an attitude of listening would be crucial to the appreciation of theatre as an aural experience as it is visual. Intercultural performances of the European strand, such as those by Brook, Mnouchkine, or of Asian practice, exemplified by Ong, market a (self-consciously) performative interculturalism – a 'double' performance of interculturalism – not only through the visual spectacle of the body (the inter-play of ethnicity and race as a performative instrument), costumes (attires that allude to or are representative of distinct cultural or performance traditions), setting (the concept of mise en scène understood conventionally) but also with music.[31] The emplacement, performance and juxtaposition of varying musical traditions – in an attempt at harmony both musical and dramaturgical – create a soundscape characteristic only of intercultural performances. There is, on an aesthetic plane, a creative catharsis yet, from a politicised perspective, such an acoustic project could reflect the superficiality of these hybridised acoustic cultures on stage where sounds are dislocated from religious and social contexts for the purpose of creating 'theatre nouveau.'[32]

In the act of listening, we are inevitably drawn to locate the source of the sound while attempting to identify the nature of this phenomenon. Such a listening to the sources of sound can be termed as a non-acousmatic experience of sound. In *The Aesthetics of Music*, music philosopher Roger Scruton defines musical experience as that which is detached from the circumstances of its production (2-3). This is termed as an acousmatic listening for

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[30] The term 'vectors' would refer here specifically to the concept introduced by Patrice Pavis in *Dictionary of Theatre* and "The State of Current Theatre Research." A fuller explication of this concept will be provided in the later sections of this chapter.

[31] The thesis recognises the vastly different forms of interculturalisms practised by Brook, Mnouchkine and Ong (already distinguished in the earlier sections of the chapter). That said, all three subscribe nevertheless to a conscious essentialism of cultural forms as the later chapters will explore.

[32] A more thorough explication of this idea will be considered in the following chapters.

> The person who listens to sounds, and hears them as music, is not seeking in them for information about their cause, or for clues as to what is happening. On the contrary, he is hearing the sounds apart from the material world. They are detached in his perception, and understood in terms of their experienced order: this is [...] the acousmatic character of musical experience (221).

For Scruton, the source of the sound is unimportant in the experience of music. Tone seems to be the intentional object of intrinsically metaphorical musical perception (Hamilton 97). To misconsider the importance of a non-acousmatic experience in sound / music is to, however, neglect the possibility of how sources in sound contribute significantly to the communication of 'meaning' (particularly in the performance-context). Segregating sound from source and having term these experiences as 'acousmatic' and 'non-acousmatic' is also ontologically impossible for both the virtual causality present in music and the physical causality of the sound are imperative in comprehending meaning and contexts. It is, as Andy Hamilton argues, an experience that embraces as much the non-acousmatic as it does the acousmatic (98). Sources of sound / music contextualise and frame its communication. In performance, sound / music, digitally or humanly produced, seeks attention and particularly so in traditional Asian performance practices where musicians are an integral stage presence whose energies and performativity signify equally as the actors on the stage. The visual aspects of the musical performance create as much (dramatic) tension as does the other performative texts on stage.

To add, a curiosity of sound / music's source would yield noteworthy interrogations about its location, historicity, signification, and engagement with the visual spectacle. The study of forms of music employed in intercultural performances would, as such, inevitability involve a deliberation on the use of instruments, their social, religious, historical and contextual significance (and signification). Characteristic of traditional Asian musical forms is the strong relation to religious custom and ritual. Instruments in these traditions have deep significance and their performance is often an invocation of an other-world; a metaphysical and sacred space is conjured in the 'here-and-now' of performance. In any performance of the Javanese or Balinese gamelan music, the instruments are regarded with deep respect for they are believed to contain spirits; the performance of these instruments, in ensemble, is a religious and spiritual experience (characteristic of all rituals) and the *Gong Ageng*, the largest central gong in the ensemble of kettle pots, metallophones, and gongs that structures musically the cyclical sound patterns, is regarded as the main spirit.[33] The manner by which these instruments are used, and the ceremonies for which they are employed, are elaborate and rich

[33] See Michael Tenzer, *Balinese Music* for a more detailed explanation of the spiritual and symbolic significations of the instruments. See also Mantle Hood, *Javanese Gamelan Sekati. Its Sanctity and Age*.

in meaning; their codes are often impermeable to those who do not subscribe to the communal rituals. Following this, the dissertation seeks to examine theories of instrumentation and to consider the ways in which cultural and religious contexts are transformed, transmuted or possibly removed in favour of dramatic effect and artistic virtuosity when employed in intercultural productions.

The study of the voice in performance would include an analysis of the use and interplay of languages and linguistic forms: their translations, transliterations and transpositions found in the intonation, timbre, volume, accent, emphasis, and what Roland Barthes terms the "grain of the voice" – the "space (genre) of the encounter between a language and a voice" (Barthes, "Grain" 181). Exploring the dialectic of meaning and materiality in vocal production, the grain is, according to Barthes, found in the voice's production of song and it is not only the timbre [but] the friction between music [and] language (ibid. 185). From the perception of the listener, s/he, through his/her identification with music, enters into a relationship with the performer's body as the "grain" is the body in the singing voice (ibid. 188). The performing voice, or what Ihde terms as the dramaturgical voice, amplifies the musical effect of speech and it stands between the enchantment of music which can "wordlessly draw us into the sound so deeply that the sound overwhelms us" (Ihde, *Listening and Voice* 170). It is in the dramaturgical voice that there is wholeness and fullness of sound and of meaning / significance as "a paradigm of embodied word" (ibid.). The consideration of Barthes' notion of the grain, and Ihde's phenomenology of the voice would assist in the study of songs, chants and vocal music crucial to the composition of the intercultural mise en scène for many Asian performance traditions manipulate voice as a dramatic strategy. The voice serves as a mask and creates the persona as much as the vestimentary and gestural signifiers create character. In Japanese Noh, for example, the deep sonorous chants characterise the performance tradition while Chinese *dan* (旦) characters of *kunqu* (昆曲) and *jingju* (京剧)employ distinctive glissandos and glides placed on a high-pitched register. Each character on stage becomes transformed and masked because of the voice as embodied meaning. The semantics of the performative voice is thus not merely what is spoken but *how* it is sung – the point where the voice is in "a dual posture, a dual production – of language and of music" (ibid.181). Barthes' notion of the 'grain', akin to a phenomenology of the voice, can also be extended to consider accents in performance. An oft neglected consideration, accents, as vocal patterns produced by the speaking / chanting / singing voice in performance irrefutably affects that which is being said – the textual semantics, the nuances of tonality and patterning. If in the voice of the embodied lies "the what of saying, the who of the saying, and the I to whom something is said" (Ihde, *Listening and Voice* 171), Peter Brook's intercultural *Mahabharata* confounds notions of cultural signification for he employed actors of varying ethnic and

cultural backgrounds but whose common language in performance was that of English or French. The actors' heavily accented brand of the spoken language, consonant with particularised ethnicities, the aural discomfort of vocalising a language that is not native to the ethnic body, and the cultural representations of performing characters of an Indian epic, engendered a (curious) site of cultural provocation. Brook's interculturally schizophrenic *Mahabharata* was found not only in Asian and Western bodies performing an Indian epic but culturally distinct accents vocalising a language that is removed from their native tongue narrating a story that has been transcribed and translated into the language of the Coloniser. The politics of cultural (mis)representation and appropriation are thus complicated by a *mélange* of accented poly-vocalities.

The translation of the sounds of words and the competing rhythms in speech and music in intercultural performances, particularly intercultural Shakespeare performances, prove a noteworthy investigation as part of developing a theory of the performativity of sound in intercultural performance. An illustration at this juncture would exemplify the importance of such an acoustic consideration and the ways an application of soundscape theories prove beneficial. In a Singapore production entitled *Wayang Tempest*, Shakespeare's *The Tempest* was given a Javanese makeover but whose text remained faithful to the bard's. The use of *Wayang Kulit* and Javanese gamelan transformed Prospero's heterotopia into a Javanese island among its numerous islands. Such an achievement of the transformation of performance space was accomplished largely through music and sound – the 'landscape' of Prospero's isle was realised acoustically; the physical environment was adumbrated by the aural dimension. The gamelan gongs and cymbals provided a transformative and ritualistic quality re-creating the fiction of Shakespeare's play, re-locating locale (as that which is now 'local'), and transposing cultural contexts. While the production may have succeeded superficially in re-contextualising Shakespeare's play (thereby proving in some manner his 'universality' across cultures), closer analysis reveals how the melodic structures and rhythm of Javanese gamelan counterpoint with the gestural rhythms of the actors and the structural rhythm of the play.[34]

An acoustic interculturalism is, at present, an imperative discourse that should be developed for it is, to reiterate, necessary to develop aural sensitivities to cultural and temporal sounds on the intercultural stage since culture and time/space is as much embedded in, located, depicted and defined by the visual as it is the acoustical. A nuanced approach to understanding sound's interaction and interface with the visual elements on stage would yield a rewarding analysis and comprehension.

[34] For a detailed study of the music and rhythms, as well as the intercultural implications of the performed gamelan, see my paper "Some heavenly music … To work mine end upon their senses": Musical and Cultural Confrontations in *Wayang Tempest*."

By Means of Performance: Methodologies and Practices

The phenomenological framework, as one of the approaches taken by the dissertation to the study of sound in intercultural performance, would prove useful for it is "a valuable invitation to move interactively through the highways and byways of performance and meaning" (Pavis, "State" 24) for in the act of perception / spectating, spectators / audiences make connections between the perceived experiences and phenomena. A phenomenology of listening is necessary in studies of interculturalism and performance for, as earlier established, knowledge is shaped by culture and an attention to differences is necessary in understanding aural experience. A "cultural poetics of listening" (Smith, B.R. 8.) should thus be established. Yet such a singular approach would concurrently exclude the possibilities other analytical frameworks can offer. In "The State of Current Theatre Research," Pavis recognises the value of a phenomenological understanding of theatre and the need for an appreciation of its materiality but the resistance to making signification would, he believes, prove to be difficult. What is seen or heard in performance will always eventually be subjected to a semiotic vectorisation – a "methodological, mnemo-technical and dramaturgical method which links networks of signs" (11), where signs constitute 'meaning' only in relation to each other. While a study of the phenomenological experience of (cultural) sounds in intercultural performances would be useful in empowering the audience-listener in the perceived meaning and experience, such an isolated methodology would be inadequate to comprehend the intercultural processes on the stage. In addition, phenomenology employs a subjectivised viewing of theatre and privileges the individual's perception-of/in-being. It thus problematises issues of intentionality and authority of the performance text and relegates the experience of performance solely to the spectator-viewer/listener. Furthermore, States' theories on a phenomenological approach to the theatre, based on the corporeality and physicality of the actors on stage, inevitably still supports a version of theatre semiotics for, by his own definition of 'Sign' and 'Image,' where "unlike the sign, the image is unique and unreproducible [...] whereas the sign is of no value unless it repeats itself" (States 25), bodies are still rendered as signs even as they are images – particularly when actors speak, since language is a verbal sign. States thus, as Eli Rozik notes, operates on a narrow and dated semiotics of theatre;

> namely an imperialistic semiotics that excluded crucial disciplines from performance analysis. A broader framework of performance analysis must, as such, be adopted; a framework that allows for an inclusion of not only "actors', animals', and children's bodies, but also the semiotic substratum and additional poetic, metaphoric and rhetorical strata (Rozik 179).

Consequently, an engagement of sound with other sign-texts (the visual, composed of the proxemic, kinesic, vestimentary, cosmetic, and pictorial, and the verbal) on stage could enable a holistic analysis of the dramatic event(s) in addition to a phenomenological approach. Semiotics is an analytical tool that provides an objective language of performative elements on stage. It would, as Bruce Wilshire suggests, allow for a formulation of "a method for revealing the meaning of things and events through revealing the structure of their modes of appearing" (11). The thesis would thus employ an active approach in the analysis of sound / music by relating possible significations of these aural experiences to the visual texts and considering the interactions and intersections between sight and sound (semiotic vectorisation) while analysing carefully sound as phenomena and a phenomenological reception of sound. It is in this integrative pattern that the performative function of sound can be comprehended for an isolated discussion on sound, its essence or effects, would prove insufficient in performance analysis.

The vectors of signification will be an imperative measure in the engagement of competing and contesting cultural signifiers on the intercultural stage. The socio-economic-cultural context of these signifiers needs also to be expounded on for semiotics can be an imperialistic venture into a universal process of theatrical encoding and decoding. Socio-semiotics, as Pavis terms it, is however unlike Reception theories or Reader-Response theories put forward by Hans-Robert Jauss and Wolfgang Iser respectively for they too "neglect the ideological plurality of the reader or spectator [and do not consider] the cultural intersection of tensions and contradictions corresponding to conflicting tendencies and groups" (Pavis, "State" 23). Pavis's call for a socio-semiotic framework in studies of theatre semiology is particularly valuable for intercultural theatre can be said to be a theatre that performs the interstices and cross-roads of culture – the 'tensions' and 'contradictions' as well as the jostling semantics, both linguistic and theatrical.

A theory of an acoustic interculturalism is, consequently, a necessary imbrication of two seemingly contrasting and oppositional analytical frameworks – in the study of performance – in addition to theories of sound (acoustemology) and acoustic communication. Concepts of sonic communication and exchange as well as theories of acoustic environments generated through the production and reception of sound enable a deeper understanding of the (inter)cultural implications. A semiological reading of performance as inter-playing and inter-acting texts provides a structured comprehension of sound / music's function in the totality of the mise en scène.

Despite attempts at any objective theorising and study of an acoustic interculturalism, the thesis recognises the difficulties of establishing any totalising theory of the performative

function of sound in intercultural performance. No theory, as Chen Xiaomei aptly puts, "can be globally inclusive, and hence conclusive of local diversities and cultural specificities" (*Occidentalism*13). The precarious terrain of sound / music studies, with its many contestations of signification and semantics, problematise such a venture. In addition, as the thesis would establish, sounds derive meaning in particular cultural environments – be it historical spaces or physical places. To lay claim to a universal theory of intercultural sound would ignore the specificities and localisations that sounds derive meaning from. Instead, the thesis would critically examine specific performances, and performative instances – or what the thesis terms performance-specific analysis, and consider the politicisations of sound in an intercultural act(ion). The term 'performance-specific' is an adaptation of what Jacqueline Lo and Helen Gilbert designate as 'site-specific' to refer to analyses in intercultural and cross-cultural performances that need to be located in and within the individuated performance, since an abstracted, comprehensive and panoptic theory (of performative interculturalism) is not feasible due to the multi-vocal complexities and variegated nature of such performances ("Topography" 31). The thesis chooses to employ a more expansive term such as 'performance-specific' because 'site-specific' gestures to a consideration that is bound to a dictated physical space and locale. With intercultural performances that challenge the notion of archetypal spaces and places, and often engender spaces heterotopic and liminal, the term 'site-specific' should thus be reconsidered.

Yet another methodological concern is an articulation of sound / music in performance. As was previously established, sound / music exist as performative phenomena and are expressive events whose materiality communicates only in performance. Any enunciation or description of sound / music removes it from the pre-symbolic and casts it into the realm of a symbolic signifier. While the thesis recognises this inherent problem since sound / music can and must inevitably be rendered a linguistic transposition, it would, where possible, append recordings of the sounds / music discussed in the chapter analyses. Although such a recording predictably removes sound / music from the performance context, an aural experience of it is no less 'authentic' or 'live' as would an actual performance of the sound. In

Liveness: Performance in a Mediatised Culture, Philip Auslander deliberates on the notion and importance of liveness accorded to live performances. He problematises the ontological dichotomy between mediatised performances – "performance that is circulated on television, as audio or video recordings, and in other forms based in technologies of reproduction" (5) and a live event. Auslander believes, in the age of mediatised communication and the mechanics of reproduction as commonplace, the ontological distinctions between live forms of performances

and mediatised ones are not that clear (7).[35] Using the example of television, and citing Rick Altman's views about the 'live' quality in television viewing, Auslander puts forward the argument that television remediates live performance for it is itself always 'live' since the television can "'go live' at any moment to convey sight and sound at a distance" (13). This mediatised liveness thus performs the quality of liveness in the theatre (though admittedly there are other distinctions of the contiguity and continuity of space that can be considered). Auslander's provocative views can be adapted to recorded sounds and recordings of 'live' performances. The phenomenological experience of viewing a recording of a theatrical performance, and a listening of recorded sounds, does not suffer from a 'signal loss' in reception. A competent analysis and evaluation can be made from recordings while factoring in the quality of liveness as a necessary condition.

To further address the predicament of a linguistic translation of sound, one can also further consider how, in the economy of symbolic exchange, all forms of communication and expression (meaning, thought) are always already (re)marked by language (and can only be done via language). Any expression and utterance is always 'unreal' and cannot be spoken of as that which is Real (the thing itself) for the experience, cast (and mediated) as language, is always already thrust into the realm of the symbolic. As Derrida famously pronounced in *Of Grammatology*, "*Il n'y a pas de hors-texte*" ("There is nothing outside of the text") (158). To imagine that there can be any competent discussion of sound / music in its pre-symbolic state would be naïve and unrealistic for an utterance, expression, or description of sound *as* sound would not be possible. All forms of communication, be it writing or speech, are but *écriture* and any form of depiction or inscription is subjected to the mark of *écriture*, of text-centrism. To speak of that which is outside the bounds of inscription and textuality would be (the) impossible and unspeakable absence. Recognising these quandaries, the thesis would thus analyse sound / music as sounds in performance and not inscriptions on page. It will involve a deep listening and comprehension to the nature of sounds and their contexts both performative and cultural.

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[35] See also Chapter 2 in which Auslander further interrogates this outmoded binary of live and mediatised in the context of the modern market and media culture. He notes with acuity that there is a growing tendency for mediatised forms of performance to replace live ones and shows further, in Chapter 3, how, with the example of rock music, live performance is not only secondary but a mimicry of the recorded audio recording.

Chapter 2

Acoustic Mimesis: Ethical Cadence and Sonic Violence in *Tambours Sur La Digue*

Violence and the Other:
Interculturalism, Violence and Trauma

Models of Western intercultural theatre have often been subjected to the totalising tendencies of Western philosophy since Western theatre privileges a logocentrism – speech over writing – that regards nature and reality in so far only as it is present. Such an ontology renders any possibility for understanding the non-present / absent as 'meaningful' since ontology presupposes an ideal of 'presence' and is a paradigm of logic that examines what is 'there' and what 'is,' and how this 'is-ness' relate to each other. In many ways, this ontology built on a presumption of presence always privileges a single, fixed viewpoint from which meanings of terms, and discourses, are anchored. Ontology presupposes a 'being-ness' of things and phenomena; logocentrism encourages an understanding of discourses based on the metaphysics of presence where presence is privileged over absence, and meaning favoured over indeterminacy. Interculturalism from the Euro-American axis, rooted in logocentrism, has consistently been a theatrical practice located in an ontology and presence which inevitably constructs a universalistic *Weltanschauung* and a paradigm that eradicates difference and indeterminacy; the (cultural) 'Other' is always (pre)viewed through the prism of that which is the same. The quest for deep structures and universal values across performance types and genres, seen in the beliefs of Schechner and Turner, and the practices of Brook and Mnouchkine, exemplifies this ontology of totality. In the process of locating shared theatrical languages and principles, philosophical, religious, stylistic and contextual differences have been conscribed by attitudes of 'Sameness,' this particularly so since it is the archetypal genre that exemplifies encounters, quite literally, with 'Others' and 'Otherness.' An intercultural engagement, theatrical, political, or social is accordingly always already an encounter with the Self through a refraction of the Other since, objectively, intercultural relations embed a subconscious desire to comprehend and assert oneself more than a genuine understanding and acceptance of the Other.

Explaining Levinas's phenomenological approach, in the introduction to *Totality and Infinity*, John Wild observes how there is an inherent tendency in all human groups, societies and individuals to maintain an egocentric attitude and to think of other individuals either as extensions of the self, or as alien objects to be manipulated for the advantage of the individual or social self (*Totality* 12). The Other is hence a medium, object or phenomenon that is to be appropriated for an understanding of the self or the reinforcement of a singular worldview. Wild further notes how, "[a]ccording to Levinas, neither of these egocentric views does justice to our original experience of the other person" (ibid. 13). Hence it is via an experience of the other phenomenologically that respect, singularity, justice and difference can be accorded to the other. As such, in what Levinas terms as the face-to-face encounter, an ethics of inter-

cultural relation arises where charges of appropriation, misrepresentation, decontextualisation, dehistoricisation and over-simplification of cultural traditions are pertinent and prevalent. This ethics is one that consistently needs to address the question of cultural trauma: a violence and distress that arises when cultures confront on the stage.

The concept of cultural trauma is one that, unlike psychological or physical trauma, involves "a dramatic loss of identity and meaning, a tear in the social fabric, affecting a group of people that has achieved some degree of cohesion. In this sense, the trauma need not be felt by everyone in a community or experienced directly by any or all" (Eyerman, *Cultural Trauma* 2).[1] As a formal definition, the term cultural trauma is

> [a] memory accepted and publicly given credence by a relevant membership group and evoking an event or situation which is (a) laden with negative affect, (b) represented as indelible, and (c) regarded as threatening a society's existence or violating one or more of its fundamental cultural presuppositions (Smelser 44).

While interculturalism on the stage does not necessarily result in a dramatic 'tear' of the social identities of cultures dramatised, the transcultural and transnational circulation of these works often reinforce misperceptions of cultural practices since spectacle is determined by consumer tastes and the economies of the festival market that consequently dictate what can and should be staged for the general audience. There is, possibly, a 'violation' of cultural principles and practices, which further solidify misrepresentations. Though the resultant cultural trauma may not necessarily be felt consciously (albeit that experience is possible), there is a gradual re-inscription of memory as simplifications and iconisations of complex cultures with dense histories, beliefs, rituals and traditions; it leads to an eventual erosion (and refiguration) of cultural identities and cultural memory for the communities whose traditions have become assimilated by the dominant codes and modes of cultural production in intercultural theatre, with these often being First-World Western discourses.[2] As collective identity formation, the cultures re-presented on the stage can become "grounded in loss and crisis" (Eyerman, "The Past in the Present" 161).

Violence is the by-product of intercultural engagement and this violence is not merely psychological, perceived as an 'aggressive' appropriation and refiguring of cultural identity, but epistemic as well. According to Levinas, violence results when differences are disregarded and

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[1] The term 'cultural trauma' was first coined by Jeffrey Alexander et. al. in *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*. See also Jeffrey Alexander "Toward a Theory of Cultural Trauma" and Neil Smelser, "Psychological Trauma and Cultural Trauma."

[2] With developments in intercultural theatre that have occurred in the last decade, it is perhaps too presumptuous to make such a claim. I recognize the generalization involved and will consider alternatives to this claim in the subsequent chapters by examining interculturalism constructed and perceived from Asia.

erased. There is violence in ontology since it erases differences and disparities in its attempt to establish neutral terms that illuminate our existence and the distance between us (Hutchens 38). As Levinas explains

> Violence is to be found in any action in which one acts as if one were alone to act: as if the rest of the universe were there only to receive the action. Violence is consequently also any action which we endure without at every point collaborating in it" (Levinas, *Difficult Freedom* 6).

The profound belief in the self as autonomous and external to reality (thereby being able to structure reality through reason and logic) encourages violence for "everything human beings experience and act upon as privileged agents is simply there to 'receive' the action" (Hutchens 38). The absence of collaboration and the Self that enacts its will engenders violence.

'Violence' resides at the heart of cultural negotiation (though recognisably this can be a somewhat reductive claim yet one that needs to be made in many respects). A (Western) 'Self,'[3] perceived as modes of artistic production and philosophical and theoretical attitudes to performance and theatre, enacts its autonomous will on (and over) an Other disregarding its alterity, erasing its difference, and reducing it to a paradigm of sameness in the absence of collaboration.[4] Self speaks for and speaks through the Other, and not alongside. It is the voice of the Other that violates the presence of the face of the other. In Ariane Mnouchkine's *Tambours Sur La Digue*, the voice of the Western 'Self' enacts an acoustemological violence as it speaks for the Orient Other through an acoustic adaptation of Asian sonic signatures, and visual appropriation of performance modes. The Far-East is (re)imagined through the ears (and eyes) of the Western Self, and violence is enacted in the attempts to establish performative Sameness while enacting Mnouchkine's belief in a common humanity located in an Oriental Theatre.

This conviction of a 'common humanity' through an excavation of universal structures in performance[5] is however far from a benevolent act since

> The neutral term 'humanity' nullifies differences possessed existentially by individual human persons. Moreover, every individual's subjectivity is grounded in norms and codes to which it answers without exception (Hutchens 39).

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[3] In this chapter, I consider the dominant 'Self' to be Western theatre and theatrical practices of interculturalism that have dominated early interculturalism. This 'simplistic' equation of 'Self' with the West will be problematised and interrogated in the later chapters of this thesis as the rise of Asia and its theatrical traditions reformulated and reconsidered create a mise en abyme where West and East reflect each other infinitely while problematising the Self-Other dialectic.

[4] Recognisably this 'Other' need not be singular but could be multiple identities.

[5] See the introductory chapter for a more detailed explication of this concept. This chapter will also explore Mnouchkine's 'Oriental' theatre and her search for universals.

Most western modes of interculturalism have since been driven by a desire to establish 'common' (performative) grounds that are rooted in early modern humanist beliefs. These attempts to establish commonality and universality based on a notion of 'humanity' disregards the uniqueness and singularity of (the) Other (culture(s)); it enacts a violent appropriation and levelling (even erasure) of differences leading to, simultaneously, cultural reinvention and cultural trauma. From a psychoanalytic perspective, violence can result from an unconscious desire that excavates curiosity, allure and romanticisation for the unknown. Although writing about the relationship between political and representational visibility in contemporary culture, Peggy Phelan acutely articulates the troubled liaison between self and other as

> a marked one, which is to say it is *unequal*. It is alluring and violent because it touches the paradoxical nature of psychic desire; the always already unequal encounter nonetheless summons the hope of reciprocity and equality; the failure of this hope then produces violence, aggressivity, dissent. The combination of psychic hope and political-historical inequality makes the contemporary encounter between self and other a meeting of *profound romance and deep violence* (3-4, own italics).

In the failure of reciprocity generated by desire and hope (to consume, to identify, to embrace the Other), opportunities for violence result in the always already unequal relationship between Self and Other. Inherent in this relationship is a desire to see oneself refracted through the vision (and aurality) of the Other framed as a totalising discourse. An engagement with the Other can then be said to be an encounter with the Self for the Self craves to identify and subsume that which is not one in order to achieve comprehension and rationality. Language (performative or linguistic) becomes the means by which that consequent violence is corporealised and enacted.

This chapter wishes to consider Mnouchkine's performative language of profound romance and deep violence with the Orient exemplified in *Tambours Sur La Digue*. Through an examination of the acoustemologies of the performance, it will interrogate the ways in which sound establishes space and place, one that is an imagined Oriental, and propose a notion of 'sonic violence' as an expression of the musical and acoustic simplification and exoticism located in music director Jean-Jacques Lemêtre's eclectic and enchanting soundtrack. The chapter will further consider the notion of rupture and trauma in the performance of cultural identities seen and heard in the performance. Consequently, it hopes to establish the ways in which a Western conception of the East, both visual and acoustic, exemplify Levinas's critique of Western ontology's subjectification of the Other as 'Sameness,' thereby erasing the alterity that is the Other. By listening akoumenologically to the reverberations of disembodied voices, the fissure between sight and sound (of a voice articulating French overlaid on 'Asian' masked

faces), and the bodies of voices heard in the performance, the chapter will examine the acoustic deconstruction of the Asian Other in Mnouchkine's profound desire to establish a universal notion of 'humanity' – an aspiration located not only in this production but in earlier Shakespeare adaptations as well.

Mimicry and Imitation: The Oriental Spectacle in *Tambours Sur La Digue*

Tambours Sur La Digue is a tale of the Oriental, and along with it the archetypes of the Oriental Other. But it is not the Orient. The cultural space of *Tambours* is a space of the imaginary Far-East where differences between Korean, Japanese and Chinese cultures are dissolved and are considered performatively as the Orient of the Same. The fictional space of *Tambours* is a kingdom in East Asia; the time is one of an imagined medievalism. Written by Hélène Cixous, and inspired by real events in China, the story revolves around a city faced with the problem of imminent flooding due to rising river waters. The ruler, Lord Khang, must decide which of the gates to release which would result in the destruction and devastation that will occur to the industrial regions or the agrarian zones, either of which would take a significant toll on the Kingdom. Khang is faced with such a tragic dilemma because of excessive deforestation which has now laid the land open to flooding. Dams and dykes prove ineffective to stop these flood waters for construction has been subjected to cheating and dishonesty by the builders. Hun, the nephew of Lord Khang, cruelly schemes to have the dykes opened so as to flood the peasant farmers. The plot is uncovered and a group of peasants, led by courageous heroine Duan, decide to camp out on Cherry Mountain and sound the drums when the floods occur so that the citizens may flee. In a natural act that spells of a fin de siècle, the city and all its inhabitants are destroyed as disaster befalls when the northern dam collapses unexpectedly and the waters rush into the city destroying every living being, good or bad regardless.[6]

Tambours can be read as a play about the breakdown of the social "immune system" (Cixious in Prenowitz, 11) and how such a system feeds upon its own degeneration and eventually destroys itself by permitting evil and greed to arise. It is a tale about human insatiability, power, courage and the insignificance of human action in the face of greater powers such as nature. As Miller observes

> Characters succumb to evil because they fail to see the enemy within themselves, because they have lost touch with the interconnectedness of their universe, and because they have destroyed the necessary balance

[6] Judith G. Miller provides a comprehensive overview of the narrative, performative considerations and influences in *Ariane Mnouchkine*. See 93-101.

> between aspects of the world one might differentiate as "natural," "mad-made," and "spiritual" (94).

Apart from its seemingly apt choice of political and humanist themes in this age of environmental degradation, imminent planetary collapse, and global political tensions, *Tambours* can be regarded as a metadrama about theatre and the role of theatre in mimicking life (or vice versa). Such a reading is affirmed by the dramaturgical choices Mnouchkine made to stage this tale of universal greed and ambition. The choice of hybrid Japanese Noh (能) and Bunraku (文楽) styles of performance, with the mode predominantly being Bunraku, was deliberate for it was not only Mnouchkine's fascination with, and 'homage' to, Asian arts,[7] it also allowed her to experiment with the simulative powers of marionettes that further serve as commentary on the hyper-fictional nature of theatre. The choice of Bunraku underscores Mnouchkine's desires to create a performance about theatre and its role in reflecting (or failing to reflect) social reality. Bunraku, as part of the Japanese performing traditions, is more commonly known as *Ningyō jōruri* (人形浄瑠璃). In kanji, the terms mean the human form as puppet accompanied by song. Mnouchkine's marionettes in *Tambours* are not the large wooden dolls of Bunraku. Subtitled *Sous forme de pièce ancienne pour marionnettes jouée par des acteurs*, actors perform as marionettes imitating the doll-like rigidity and executing consistently the synthetic angular movements consonant with those of bolt-jointed wooden puppets. The actors' faces are, in addition, masked to hide human expression and conceal the corporeality of the human skin while fingers are bound or gloved in stockings to achieve the same 'inhuman' artificiality. This double-simulation of flesh imitating wood emulating flesh reverberates with, and is metonymic of, the intercultural tensions resulting from mimicry and imitation.

Imitation that leads to artistic improvisation and adaptation is further observed in the performance space where convention gives way to functionalist hybridity. Considering the space by which the sounds are performed is imperative for the soundscapes are made meaningful only in their performative contexts and when sound can be understood non-acousmatically. The stage platforms in *Tambours* are variations of the Bunraku stage; it seems a combination of Noh's *hashigakari* (橋掛, a walkway leading from the backstage area to the main stage), Bunraku's *funazoko* (舟底, main working area, literally meaning 'the ship's bottom) and Western stage conventions. Abiding by the Bunraku tradition, but still testimony to an imitation of a performance tradition, Mnouchkine had actors perform the handler roles. In Bunraku, the operation of puppets is managed by a three-man team consisting of the chief

[7] See Miller, 95.

handler (主使い *omo-zukai*), the left handler (左使い *hidari-zukai*), and the leg handler (足遣い *ashi-zukai*). The *ashi-zukai* and *hidari-zukai* are dressed completely in black with black hoods (and black costume traditionally symbolizes invisibility in Japanese theatre). The *omu-zukai*, in contrast, dresses in formal costume and is in full view of the audience. In *Tambours*, the number of handlers for each human-puppet varied between one to three with all being hooded and garbed in black. These handlers 'managed' the human-puppets, 'manipulated' their arms, hands, and determined various other actions to simulate the tradition.

Of greater concern to this study is the role of sound and music in performing the intercultural. If culture, as Paul Carter in "Ambiguous Traces, Mishearing, and Auditory Space" propounds, is to be listened to and not merely viewed (43), the question of what culture(s) emerge in the interplay of sounds in *Tambours* arises. The soundscape of *Tambours* is one of diverse and original tunes with distinct pentatonic patterns and chords that characterize Asian musical patterns, commingled with heavy French accents, *changgo* (장고) drumming, and digital sound effects. Despite music director and Théâtre du Soleil's resident composer Jean-Jacques Lemêtre's desire to create an acoustic ecology consonant with the Oriental elements of the play, the soundtrack could be loosely characterized as 'Eastern' but one motivated by an aesthetic eclecticism. In the performative quest for creating a distant 'Far East,' Lemêtre employed a range of other instruments of various cultural origins[8] in a celebration of form over meaning, effect over context. These sounds, produced largely by the extensive use of string instruments, including a viola and a santur (a hammered dulcimer of Persian and Indian origin) to create moments of high 'strung' tension, were accompanied by the distinctive bass resonances of the Korean *changgo* (장고) and *buk* (북) drums (the drums referred to in the title of the play, and are also the drums played by the drummers on Cherry Mountain), and Chinese cymbals and gongs as well as a Japanese *shamisen* (三味線, a three-string lute-like instrument) and a long end-blown alto flute. These sounds sought to create dramatic tension and mark the changing moods while dictating emotion – a distinctly Western theatrical philosophy in which music is subordinated to the visual text and is used merely to accentuate and adumbrate the narrative elements. Their cultural and performative contexts were disregarded in favour of Western modes and philosophy of music performance in theatre.

Imitation (and an imitative re-vision) is the performative principle that lies behind *Tambours*, including that of the soundscape. As Homi Bhabha, writing of the disruptive and subversive forces of mimicry and imitation in colonial discourse, observes

[8] I recognize this classification of instruments into 'East' and 'West' is somewhat simplistic and the remaining sections of the chapter will interrogate this notion of 'Eastern' and 'Western' instruments.

> Mimicry is, thus, the sign of a double articulation; a complex strategy of reform, regulation and discipline, which 'appropriates' the Other as it visualizes power. Mimicry is also the sign of the inappropriate, however, a difference or recalcitrance which coheres the dominant strategic function of colonial power, intensifies surveillance, and poses an immanent threat to both 'normalized' knowledges and disciplinary powers (*Location* 122-3).

Bhabha, in "Of mimicry and Man," writes of mimesis as a potentially destabilizing force that undermines the assimilative intentions of the colonial overlords by colonial subjects. He observes how, in colonial discourse, a totality (to employ Levinas's lexicon) is propagated by having the colonial subject abandon their primitive practices, heritage, customs and language through mimicry – an imitation of the more advanced colonial masters. The colonized state would hence be a replica of the home nation and the colonial subjects would then collude in their own subjugation by a conscious (and sub-conscious) 'self-denial' of one's own culture of origin through the act of mimicry. Bhabha, however, believes that this very act undoes its own intentions for it can threaten the centre-periphery dialectic by turning the colonized states into replicas which erode the central authority and presence of the colonial motherland. An authentic authority will hence be jeopardised by the subversive powers of imitation for with replication comes adaptation and modification such that the mimicry becomes menace; it disrupts power and persuasion through metamorphosis and the exploitation of the spaces of ambiguity. As Bhabha notes, "mimicry represents an ironic compromise" (*Location* 122), one which means that "colonial mimicry is the desire for the reformed Other, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite" (ibid.).

The mimicry employed in *Tambours* is not akin to what Bhabha describes of postcolonial conditions but one perhaps more subversive, as it is masked as an attempt to celebrate the Orient.[9] In *Tambours*, a 'reversed' mimicry occurs for the centre mimics the periphery – the Orient-Other. In its further transformation and improvisation of the time-honoured performance traditions witnessed in the performance, there is dissolution and violent erasure of the authority of the 'peripheral' culture. While Japanese reviewers did not regard Mnouchkine's *Tambours* as an imitation of Bunraku and dismissed it merely as a product of a French imagination, Bhabha's theory of mimicry can be employed to investigate the cultural power plays evident in such an intercultural production. What is seen and heard is, in *Tambours*, a reversal of Bhabha's belief in the erasure of the authority of the centre; the Orient proliferates and with each manifestation, there is transformation and transmogrification. Tracing the concept of 'wonder' and how it is used as a device that at once

[9] This argument will be explored further in the subsequent sections of the chapter.

renounces and legitimates the colonization of new territories, and is also a discursive device to justify imperialism, Stephen Greenblatt argues that "improvisation on the part of either Europeans or natives should not be construed as the equivalent of sympathetic understanding; it is rather what we can call appropriative mimesis, imitation in the interest of acquisition" (99). Though recognisably, mimesis can also be a form of flatter, Greenblatt considers otherwise and believes that the "process of mimetic doubling and projection [...] does not lead to identification with the other but to a ruthless will to possess" (98).

Appropriative Mimesis: Sonic Exoticism and the Imagined Far East

This mimicry as a "ruthless will to possess" (Greenblatt 98) is most evident in the visual text but equally prevalent in the soundscape of the performance. In Jean Jacques Lemêtre's musical score, which serves predominantly to create the Far East, a sonic orientalism is achieved by an act of appropriative mimesis (of an-Other culture's acoustic signatures) refashioned as an imagined acoustics (and an acoustics of the imagined Orient).

In the opening scene of the performance (Chapter 1 00:02:38mins),[10] prior to the introduction of the human-puppet characters, Lemêtre presents an 'Oriental' imaginary via sound and music. Before actors are seen on stage, the imagined orient is established with sound. The dense resonations of the bass drums (Korean *buk* [북]) create the larger rhythmic cycles of which all other instruments interpose and accompany. The distinct metallic sonority of the *jingdaluo* (京大鑼, a Chinese gong used commonly in religious ceremonies and Beijing Opera. It produces a fairly high-pitched and bright tonal quality) reverberate with shrill overtones that are produced as wave-like vibrations of each rhythmic strike, and mark space with sound since this unique sonic quality is prevalent only in gongs whose origins as an instrument can be traced to China. The periodic crashes of the *jingbo* (京鈸, Chinese cymbals), the rapid metrical strikes on the high-pitched *kkwaenggwari* (꽹과리, a Korean small gong), along with the tremolo bowing on the viola, create the cacophony of percussive sounds that establishes not only the tensions of the potential tragedy narrated by the characters of the opening scene, but also the intercultural attribute that is located in the mise en scène.[11] What appears following this sonic setting are French actors masked as dolls, and lifted onto the stage

[10] All references to *Tambours* are taken from the recorded DVD performance.

[11] It should be noted that there are many variations of these instruments listed, according to size and timbre. The *dagu* (大鼓), for example, sounds similar to the *zhangu* (战鼓) but whose sounds are thicker and deeper. As I am unable to determine the actual instruments used by Lemêtre in *Tambours*, I have relied instead on listening and recognising these sounds, and postulating, as accurately as possible, what instruments may have been employed.

(by French *zukais*), in a spectacle of mimetic Japanese Bunraku. The dissolution of cultural and performative boundaries becomes salient in this aesthetic appropriation which regards the Orient as a totality – of both the visual and acoustic texts. Lemêtre's non-word phonic expression ('ahh') of chromatic slides concludes the instrumental introduction.

While much can be said about the ocular mimesis and replication of the 'exotic' East, the music that establishes this Orient is by far of greater concern since it establishes (cultural) space and place as much as the visual text does. The music heard prior to the appearance of the actors, in this opening scene, is an acousmatic experience where a subject dislocates auditory perception from the source of the sound(s)and relocates experience toward the content of the perception.[12] What is heard are the frequencies of a recognisably 'exoticised' East (established by the instruments earlier mentioned). The term 'exoticism' has been rarely considered in the field of music studies till the late 70s and early 80s largely as a consequence of Edward Said's seminal work *Orientalism*. Since then, musicology, and particularly ethnomusicology, has grown in concern with the 'exoticisation' of Other musics, and the ethics of sonic encounters with the Other(s). Timothy Taylor, in *Beyond Exoticism*, a seminal work in ethnomusicology that applies new historicism to the study of musical influences in history, defines this often misunderstood term as "manifestations of an awareness of racial, ethnic, and cultural Others captured in sound" (2) and an approach that "fetishise(s) form and style" (ibid.).

An apt example of this exotic fascination with 'Oriental' acoustics is Lemêtre's choice of featuring an archetypal Eastern instrument, whose tonal qualities are instantaneously recognizable, in the title menu of the DVD. The high-pitched, transverse bamboo flute *taegeum* (대금) is featured as the predominant sound that introduces the performance.[13] Perhaps in musical concordance with the featured Korean percussion ensemble of *changgo* (장고), *buk* (북) and *kkwaenggwari* (꽹과리) (which form a *SamulNori*, 사물놀이, ensemble), that is the focal point of the narrative, the distinct timbre of the *taegeum* which produces a bright, high-pitched 'trill' with resonating harmonics collaborates with the dark, strident, lower-pitched tremolos of the viola. What was conceived was an interculturalism achieved by sonic expression, where sounds that have come to be associated with the 'East' and 'West' created an exotic 'in-between' space of a fictive Orient located by a real Occident.

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[12] See Chapter 1, p. 58 for an explanation of the terms 'acousmatic' and 'non-acousmatic.' The term 'acousmatic' was first coined by Pierre Schaeffer in his publication *Traité des objets musicaux* to explain sounds that "one hears without seeing the causes behind it" (Schaeffer 91).

[13] I refer to the DVD performance here. Admittedly, the instrument featured here could be the Chinese *dizi* (笛子) since the timbre of both are extremely similar with both having a membrane that gives it a unique resonating 'buzzing' and harmonics. Nevertheless, the performance traditions, acoustic principles and the consequent tunes are somewhat different.

Much of *Tambours'* soundtrack reflects an ahistorical fetishisation of Oriental form and style. Iconic acoustic signatures of cultural sounds were identified and appropriated as sonic souvenirs to compose an imagined acoustemology of the Far East. Sounds reveal distinctly ethnicity, race and culture for it is undeniable that music is, and has always been, appropriated as cultural signatures beginning with the imitation of sounds in nature and the voice for rituals. Instruments, furthermore, reveal the social, religious and cultural environments and conditions which have shaped their associations with civilisations and ethnicities (Rault 151). While it is arguably true that many instruments (and their sonic qualities) of the East Asian region (China, Japan, and Korea), in the course of history, share many similarities and influences, the appropriation in *Tambours* occurs fundamentally as mimetic exoticism, with an imagined (re)composition as the performative process. It can be regarded, critically, as a violent abstraction of musical culture and context of each performance tradition, subjected to Western theatrical conventions of musical emotions and the accentuation of mood and atmosphere. The Japanese *shamisen* (三味線) is plucked in moments of relative calm while the viola is bowed rapidly at times of dramatic tension (Chapter 6 00:38:20 – the storm before the floods, and Chapter 11 01:16:00 – the murder of the Architect). The dulcimer of Persian origin (*Santur*), which has since become characteristic of Asian sounds being adopted by the Chinese (*yangqin*, 扬琴) in the15-16 century and Koreans (*yanggeum*, 양금) in the 18 century, is used in light-hearted moments of frivolity such as the introduction of the noodle seller, Madame Li (Chapter 4 00:20:29). Lemêtre improvises the playing conventions by both hammering (with a playing stick) and strumming (with the fingers) the dulcimer. What resounds is sound effect for emotional affect. Instruments and their sonic signatures become thematised and serve as leitmotifs to dramatic situations and specific characters. The performance practices and philosophies, and certainly their ritual and religious origins, become secondary to thematic intentions. The exotic Orient is further imagined with yet another of Lemêtre's non-word chant and occasional cuts to the unkempt, bearded music director's performance on the globulostrum – Lemetre's self-invented double-necked dulcimer (for example, Chap 4 00:20:54). The chanting resembles, intentional or otherwise, the Korean *p'ansori* tradition (판소리) – a traditional vocal and percussion music genre where a singer (known as *sorikkun* (소리꾼)) chants and sings to a repertoire of *madangs* (마당, historical / traditional stories).[14] Such a visual-musical interjection of an 'alter-*p'ansori*' underscores the integral and imperative role of music (and the musician) yet concurrently re-scribes the Other as 'primitive,'

[14] According to Théâtre du Soleil's official website (*Le Bac au Soleil*), *Tambours'* music was inspired by not only Korean *samul nori* but also *p'ansori* chant. See <http://www.lebacausoleil.com/SPIP/rubrique.php3?id_rubrique=18>. *P'ansori* is a genre of Korean traditional vocal music, dating back to the early 19 century, that features a singer and a percussionist 'chanting' satires and love stories. See Chapter 4 for a more detailed discussion about *p'ansori*.

distinguished not only as 'Eastern' sounds produced by traditional instruments but also manufactured by a white man conforming to visual stereotypes of a Hindu Brahmin. The chants are not the complex *aniris* (아니리, descriptive speech) and *changs* (창, song) of *p'ansori* but phonic expressions of affect.

There is, in the act of acoustic mimesis as reflected in *Tambours*' soundtrack, a consistent reflection of the dominant (Western) Self through a refraction of the Other. Lemêtre's experimental composition of sliding pitches, nondiatonic and microtonal scales, and non-word expressions echo many Western intercultural theatrical discourses of regarding the East as the primitive exotic, now, in the age of a distant post-colonialism, used as inspiration and rejuvenation for theatrical practices. This compositional 'appreciation' of the sounds of the Orient reveals broader anxieties debated in cultural anthropology; it demonstrates what Johannes Fabian terms an allochronic discourse - a science of other men in another time – whose ideological foundation laid in a *chronopolitics* – a politics of time and period rather than culture (143-4, own italics). The collective Far East (and its sounds), understood as totality in *Tambours*, can always only remain as a distant past entrapped by unchanging tradition; the Orient is the past. An acoustemology of the Orient is thus, in the practice of Western interculturalism, always already associated with the pre-modern whose traditions and practices could be excavated as alternative performance ontologies. This imagined Orient is thus "distanced from the West (to suggest its difference [of a distant time]), then embraced as a potent import" (Corbett 167, own insertion). Interculturalism, in its search for the Orient conceived scenographically or acoustemologically, becomes consumed by a ritualistic search for a ritualistic past; the Orient is pre-modern.

"Every Situation Has Its Rhythm": Rhythm as Universal

The most salient example of this chronopolitical mimesis that invents an acoustic imaginary manifested as sonic exoticism is the musical climax of drumming peasants (Chapter 8 00:51:03).[15] Here, a harvest ritual of Korean *SamulNori* (사물놀이) is theatrically 'de-ritualised' as Oriental spectacle. In the opening lines of what is perhaps the most musically enthralling scene of the performance, heroine Duan, Captain of the Watch, articulates an autoreflexive statement that reveals the mimetic quality of the performative moment: "Every situation has its rhythm." While referring, in the narrative context, to the possible scenarios of impending dangers and the rhythmic styles accorded to each as warning sirens, the statement echoes,

[15] This sequence can also be viewed on *Youtube*. See "Theatre Du Soleil Tambour, "<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N5RXsjTU34M>

metadramatically, the need to consider cultural contexts by which an intercultural 'rhythm' is established.

Rhythm can be regarded as a 'universal' quality in all organized sounds, elementary not just in music but also speech. It is indisputable that beats, metre, and tempo are the fundamental structures of music. Metrical time is a primordial phenomenon in music, particularly in Western music, though some forms such as chants, Persian classical music, and the *Honkyoku* (本曲)[16] for the Japanese flute *shakuhachi* (尺八) can be considered ametrical. Even the lack thereof always already reflects an a priori fascination with the presence / absence of rhythm. According to Howard Goodall, rhythm holds such fundamental significance for human society because it is located in all aspects of human existence – from the rhythms of movement, to the pulsations of the heart and the human desire to control time (which is invisible rhythmic movement).[17] Theo Van Leeuwen observes that tempo in music is inherently associated with time and consequently provides a link between physiological time, through musical rhythm, and social timing through which social activities are ordered (6). It is this quality of measured time and rhythm that an acoustic interculturalism is attempted in *Tambours*. In the plot, the deep resonance of the drums in prescribed tempo is that very quality that attempts to liberate the peasants from danger; it is also these self-same rhythms that seek to dissolve the difference of the Orient Other in a display of cyclical drumming that reflects a universal concern – time.

The soundscape of this scene resonates with familiar echoes of the *SamulNori* tradition. The percussion ensemble of peasants and farmers replicate visually this musical tradition and mimics the rhythmic signatures of a *SamulNori* ensemble as well. *SamulNori* is modern genre of traditional Korean folk or farmers' music and literally means "four things in play." The "four things" refer to the four percussion instruments that create the rhythmic repertoires: *kkwaenggwari* (꽹과리, small bronze gone), *jing* (징, a larger bronze gong), *changgo* (장고, hourglass-shaped drums), and *buk* (북, a barrel drum). *SamulNori* ensembles consist often of a small band of percussionists and this drumming tradition has its roots *in p'ungmul nori* (풍물, literally 'wind objects'), which is a rural folk tradition of percussion music that precedes *SamulNori*.[18] Engendered from *uttdari pungmul* (웃다가풍물, a specific form of *kut*, or shaman

[16] This refers to 'original pieces' for the *shakuhachi* (尺八) first played by Japanese Zen monks as early as the 13 century.

[17] See *How Music Works*, Series 1 Ep 2: Rhythm (Television Production). Tiger Aspect. Channel 4. 2009.

[18] *SamulNori* is often regarded as an 'urban' development of *p'ungmul nori* since the latter was specifically a form that was performed in rural agrarian contexts. See Hesselink, *P'ungmul: South Korean Drumming and Dance*, 201-2. See also Keith Howard, "SamulNori: Rhythm 'N' Seoul" in *Creating Korean Music: Tradition, Innovation and the Discourse of Identity. Perspectives on Korean Music Volume 2*, 1-24 for a discussion on the origins of *SamulNori*.

ceremony rhythm of the Gyeonggi-do and Chungcheong provinces of South Korea), as well as the genres of Yeongnam folk music (otherwise known as Yŏngnam nongak), *SamulNori* first emerged only in the late 1970s.[19] *SamulNori*, like *p'ungmul nori*, belongs to the *nongak* (농악, peasant work / folk music) form of Korean music and was traditionally considered to be farmers' music. It was developed by peasants in the agricultural society of Korea, mainly in the South, and performed in agrarian Korea during times of good harvest.[20]

The visual mimesis of a *SamulNori* ensemble in *Tambours* creates, undeniably, aesthetic impact and is an important narrative element. Yet this replication becomes further complicated, and removed, since physical bodies replicate puppets whose performance patterns emulate live human bodies drumming in synchrony. The sounds of the drumming emerge from offstage, 'behind-the-scenes' by stage-hands and voice doubles. This highly performative moment remarks upon itself like a play-within-a-play. Theatricality is heightened as imitation becomes salient. Copies appear as the audience views humans imitating puppets which in turn imitate bodies that perform *SamulNori*. Yet the sounds of the drums emerge not from these hollow bodies but invisible ones behind the screens. This simulated ('noiseless') drumming of the actor-puppets resounds with absences and silences, here of acoustic fidelity, cultural identity, and performance authenticity. Ironically, a poignant moment regulated by the inspiring rhythms of percussive sounds exposes, acoustically, the masks of a reverse mimesis. In listening, one hears an acoustic simulacrum achieved through mimetic echoing.

While they can be experienced phenomenologically, where the measured tempo of the drums and the regulated beats of the *kkwaenggwari* serve to regulate the internal pulses of the listener thereby 'drumming up' courage in the peasants as it informs of danger (and in listening to it live, the same effect can be said to occur in the listener/audience), meaning in sound (and rhythm) must also be considered in context particularly so with traditional music that has a history of deeper signification. While somewhat trivial and explicit, the rhythmic cycles in *SamulNori* celebrate harvest with its associations of 'upbeat' merriment and jollity and is generally considered, as performance practice, to move from slower rhythms to faster, accompanied by a rise in dynamic level (Howard, "Development of Korean Traditional Music" 394-6). In *Tambours*, three drumming patterns gesture to danger, death and destruction in respective circumstances – flood from the North, the South, and a breach in the dam. In addition, the four instruments involved are symbolic of different weather conditions with the *changgo* representing rain, the *kkwaenggwari* thunder, the *jing* the sounds of the wind, and the

[19] See Nathan Hesselink, "Samul nori as Traditional," 407-412.
[20] See Song Bang-Song, *Korean Music and Other Aspects*, 44-45. See also Hesselink, *P'ungmul: South Korean Drumming and Dance* for a detailed study of the *p'ungmul nori* as well as *SamulNori* traditions.

buk, clouds. The sounds produced thus symbolise the natural environment and the balance of nature since the spiritual concepts of *yin* (阴) and *yang* (阳) also resonate when these instruments are performed: the *buk* and *changgo* are associated with the sounds of the earth while the *jing* and *kkwaenggwari* represent sounds of the heavens. The drummers and their performance of musical drumming consequently represent a unity of all elements – man, earth, and heaven, and an alliance between nature and reason.[21] The mimetic *SamulNori* in *Tambours* while coincidentally reflective of the 'music of the heavens' which herald the tempests that destroy the city and countryside ironically performs the converse intentions – not a harmony between heaven and earth but an imbalance that leads to annihilation.

A surface listening to the drummers can enchant for the deep bass resonance of the drums invigorate and inspire. This doubly theatrical moment further consumes a listener's attention and emotion for it calls attention to its own performativity. Yet an ethnomusicological analysis can lend one ears to listen deeply, and to recognise the performative mimesis and sonic exoticism present. Though adaptive, flexible, and innovative, a *SamulNori* performance does abide by a prescribed set of dynamics and tempo. There are set repertoires for various social and religious functions and each rhythmic pattern has a model, prescribed by shared downbeats, precise numbers of fundamental large gong strikes and a code of stress and accent points indicated by the small gong (Howard, *Creating Korean Music* 16). In fact, the *SamulNori* canon has become standardised and is a music genre of its own right called *samullori* (ibid.). The genre has a canon of pieces with archetypes that are known, taught and shared. The most important repertoire for the *SamulNori* is *Pinari* (a Kyŏnggi-province narrative prayer and ritual blessing), *Samdo Sŏlchanggo Karak* (four hourglass-shaped drum combined rhythms from the Kyŏnggi, Ch'ungch'ŏng and Chŏlla provinces used as exorcism and blessing), *Samdo Nong'ak Karak* (farmers music from the previously mentioned three provinces) and *P'ankut* (entertainment-oriented performances).[22] The *Samdo Nong'ak Karak* is perhaps the most popular of samul nori pieces and there are three pieces entitled 'Yŏngnam Nong'ak, 'Uddari Pungmul,' and 'Honam Udo-Kut.' In a 'Honam udo kut' or 'Honam udo nong'ak' (rhythms from the "right" or western counties of the Chŏlla provinces),[23] there are eight sections with each of these being a discrete and self-contained piece comprising a set series of

[21] See Broughton et. al., *The Rough Guide to World Music Vol 2: Latin and North America, Caribbean, India, Asia and Pacific*, 163. See also Howard, *Creating Korean Music*, 29-30, 35 for an explanation of the religious significance of the instruments and their associations with *yin* and *yang*.

[22] Recognisably, what is deemed an accurate repertoire is a debate within Korean ethnomusicology. See Nathan Hesselink, "Samul nori as Traditional: Preservation and Innovation in a South Korean Percussion Genre," *Ethnomusicology* 48:3 (2004) 405-439, for a further discussion.

[23] *Honam* technically refers to both North and South Chŏlla provinces and *udo* refers to "right side." For a further explanation of the repertoire titles, see Hesselink, "Samul nori as Traditional: Preservation and Innovation in a South Korean Percussion Genre," 413.

rhythmic patterns.[24] The opening pattern, *och'ae chilgut* (also known as the 'five beat road ritual'), played as a cycle, consists of five interlocking measures (known as *pang*) each beginning with a large gong strike: phrase 1 is divided into four beats (subdivided within the beats as 2+3+3+2), phrase 2 has four beats (2+2+3+3), phrase 3 contains four beats (3+2+2+3), phrase 4 possesses three beats (3+3+3), and phrase 5 holds three beats (3+3+3). Each unit is marked by a large gong strike (hence 5 beats) and is 48 beats in length, with beats being termed *kak*.[25] The second section, *chajin och'ae chilgut* ('fast five beat road ritual'), the faster section, features unequal phrase lengths and beat divisions with the first three phrases being a 10/8 tempo (2+3+3+2), 10/8 (2+2+3+3) and 9/8 (3+3+3) with the final two phrases of 12/8.[26] The third section, *chwajilgut* ('left road ritual'), follows the 10/8 opening pattern (3+2+3+2) and is added on to the preceding pattern. This is then played as a cycle with a gradually increasing speed from 116 to 184 to the dotted quaver. The fourth section, *p'ungnyu kut* ('refined ritual'), has a slow tempo and is considered locally as the 'slow *sam ch'ae'*. Here, within a 12/8 metric frame, there are three large gong strokes on each of the first three beats (first, fourth and seventh quaver) but the texture is lightened on the second beat by the simple expedient of the hour glass drum's mallet-shaped stick switching from playing on the left head to the right head (Howard, *Creating Korean Music* 51). Perhaps the most interesting pattern is *kukkôri* (the fifth section) where the compositional complexities of *SamulNori* are revealed since this section incorporates the vigorous movements of the dance cycle as well. *Kukkôri* is structured as a pre-composed material and cadences interspersed with solo improvisatory segments for the *changgo*, *kkwaenggwari* and *buk*. These improvisations are often a display of the performers' virtuosity where technical ability is tested with players often "pulling against the regular 'beat'" (Hesselink 426). The performance ends with an uplifting final section, *chakin samch'ae*, in which a final cadential pattern consisting of eight phrases (12/8 rhythm) is played at a rapid tempo of 208 to the dotted quaver.[27]

Duan's rhythms of danger, though employing the *changgo* to establish the main tempos and the *kkwaenggwari* to lead the cycles, create a specific set of rhythms that are

[24] The eight sections are 1) och'ae chilgut, 2) chakin och'ae chilgut 3) chwajilgut, 4) p'ungnyugut, 5) kukkori, 6) yangsando 7) transition, samch'ae, 8) chajun samch'ae. See Hesselink, "Samul nori as Traditional," 419.
[25] See Appendix 2.1 for a notation score of *och'ae chil kut*.
[26] See Hesselink, "Samul nori as Traditional" 419-429, for a more detailed explanation of the rhythms employed in these two sections as well as other sections in a *samul nori* performance.
[27] For examples of notional representations of some of *samul nori's* repertoire, see Howard, "Securing the Canon," in *Creating Korean Music* 25-54. Also, listen to what Howard terms as a 'definitive version' of the *Honam Udo Nong'ak* on *Samulnori* by Kim Duk Soo (King Records, SYNCD 114-115 ; 2cd), disc 1 track 2. See also Howard, *Creating Korean Music* 49-51 for an explanation of the rhythmic movements of the '*Honam udo nongak / kut*' sequence.

dissimilar from any *samullori* repertoire.[28] The opening patterns, on an initial hearing, resemble acoustically the *Yŏngnam Nongak*, a deeper listening to the rhythmic differentials reveal these rhythms to be simulative of this peasant music.[29] Even though the patterns of downbeats and the stress and accent points of the gongs are still distinct, the rhythms of this performance are distinctly functional to the performative. The rhythms performed to establish danger arising from the North employs a variety of patterns that consist of about 7 (2+3+4+1+2+2) compound time signatures (with a complex metre) with each section marked by the clangs of the *kkwaenggwari*. The rhythm increases in tempo with the closing bar falling on a determinate strike to mark the resolution. The rhythm begins with two bars of 6/8 rapidly transiting to three bars of 3/8 and consequently four bars of 2/8 rhythm. It assumes yet again the 6/8 metre followed by 2 bars of 2/8 and resolving on a transited syncopated cadence. The tempo established, though increasing particularly in the middle sections, averages at about 105 to 110 of the dotted quaver. The rhythmic signal for a breach in the dam is achieved by an interesting 'dialogue' of instruments and corresponding metres. The *kkwaenggwari* begins with a rapid strike of 9 accented beats followed by the *changgo* and *buk* responding with four phrases of 2/8. This sequence is repeated twice with the following section realised by a quicker instrumental-dialogue of 5 beat accents for the *kkwaenggwari*, *changgo* and *buk* drums which climax in a cacophony of rhythms and timbres that merge with the sequence closing cadentially on a 3/4 rhythm and 3 bars of 2/8. Distinctly, such rhythmic sequences are uncharacteristic of the traditional *SamulNori* rhythms and have been motivated by the narrative concerns. Recognisably, there are sections of identical rhythmic patterns such as Duan's rhythm's signalling a breach in the dam and phrases of *Yŏngnam Nongak*, its contextual differences render the significations, ritualistic, religious, or metaphysical, radically different underscoring yet again the surface play of sounds for dramatic effect. While reinvention and innovation are dominant characteristics of intercultural practice, these sequences reinforce the mimesis prevalent in the visual text and accentuates the appropriative intentions as a "will to possess" since what is heard discloses the superficial presentation of Korean *SamulNori*.[30]

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[28] See also Appendix 2.2 for a schematic notation of another piece from the *samul nori* repertoire, '*Yongnam nongak*.' The rhythms established are still distinctly different from those loosely adapted in this simulation. Listen also to Track 2, Disc 2 of *Kim Duk Soo SamulNori* (Synnara Music, King SYNCD-115) for a rendition of Yŏngnam nongak performed by Kim Duk Soo. Kim Duk Soo is considered one of the foremost SamulNori performer, composer and master teacher in Korea. See a *SamulNori* performance by Kim at *Youtube* <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yzrhNuo1rsY&feature=fvw>.

[29] View a performance of *Yŏngnam nongak SamulNori* performance at *Youtube* <http://www.youtube.com/watch?gl=GB&feature=related&hl=en-GB&v=XziGQswTcGY>.

[30] To add, *SamulNori* as a form of 'traditional' music has been disputed since its authenticity is often ir. question due to the urban contexts of its engendering and the relatively youth of the genre. Yet, its roots in traditional forms such as the *p'ungmul nori* have been well documented and have since become captured in the popular imagination of Korean locals. See Howard, *Creating Korean Music* 20.

This acoustic mimesis, as shallow surface play of the Korean drumming rituals, continues when the peasant ensemble, all of whom resemble the Other encouraging a visual reading of the Orient as simulated copies, attempts to resound the rhythms of "courage, joy, swiftness and imagination" [*Tambours*, DVD, Chap 8 54:21-22]. Here, as the Chancellor looks on the drum ensemble with admiration and respect, the drumming is accompanied by the sounds of Balinese gamelan metallophones (*saron, gendér, gangsa,* and *ugal*) whose sonic signatures are distinct due to their metallic resonances that are heavy with harmonic overtones. The integration of distinct musical traditions in a single narrative moment, for affect, exemplifies once again a preoccupation with (cultural) sounds that merely function as secondary to the dominance of emotion and mood.

Spectacularity, as a visual metaphor, is the key element in the spectacle of the drummers. To *SamulNori*, however, the motions must become harmonised and generated as 'motion in stillness' where, abiding by Taoist principles, any dance must move towards meditation rather than spectacle; the spectacle emerges from introspection (Howard, *Creating Korean Music* 28). Any performance of *SamulNori* needs to achieve a synthesis of *mot* and *mat* and a balance of the yin and yang complex, with *mot* being loosely defined as "a composite value formulated by the combination and integration of beauty, elegance and refinement" (Kim 4) and *mat* an entering of one's spirit into the object (Hwang 31).[31] It is *mot* and *mat* that determine how drum or gong strikes fit within the rhythmic cycle by stretching, pulling and adding emphasis through distending regularity (Howard, Creating Korean Music 35). *SamulNori*, unlike *Tambours'* simulation, is not a performance of virtuosity.

Auditory Imagination: An Oriental Acoustemology

Such a critique may seem unmerited considering the transformative and innovative nature of contemporary *SamulNori* performances. Yet an ethnomusicological analysis of the rhythms heard exemplifies the exotic fascination and mimetic quality prevalent in *Tambours*. The imitation remains a visual 're-presentation' of the instruments used in *SamulNori* and the acoustic mimesis is located in an assumed sense of universal rhythm and tempo, and their consequent physiological and emotional responses. The performance of oriental drumming exemplifies Doh Ihde's notion of 'auditory imagination.' Ihde, in *Listening and Voice*, notes how one can imaginatively "presentify and represent the sounds of the world" (133). These sounds

[31] The aesthetic philosophies of *mot* and *mat* are too complex to be discussed in this thesis. For a deeper explication on these two concepts, see Hwang Byong-Ki, "Aesthetic Characteristics of Korean Music and Theory and Practice" 29-40.

do not necessarily stem from perceived sounds and can exist in polyphony; these 'co-presences' are variations upon harmonies or dissonances, upon musical sound (ibid. 134).

The acoustemological principle of this sequence is distinctly one of creating an Oriental soundscape and is not concerned with the 'fidelity' of the modes and styles of these Eastern musical forms. The Orient is imagined as, and essentialised to become, the timbres of leather-skin drums and metallic gongs through an imaginary association of these sonic frequencies to those found in East Asian percussion instruments. Perceived sound and imagined sound commingle to produce the fictitious Orient in *Tambours* where musical styles, performances and responses are heard by the ossicles of Sameness. As Georgina Born observes

> [w]hen music works to create a purely imaginary identification, an imaginary figuration of sociocultural identities, with no intent to actualize those identities, a kind of psychic tourism [occurs] through music [...] [It] powerfully inscribes and reinscribes existing boundaries of self and other, as well as the hierarchies and stratifications between those categories (35).

The Orient is objectified as Lemêtre's act of acoustic mimesis underscores Levinas's arguments about the Self's desire, in that primal face-to-face encounter, to salvage the strangeness of the Other. The Other is re-imagined acoustically, and is appropriated, objectified and reduced to function. Along with the visual text of a reverse mimesis in which Mnouchkine 'inverts' the Bunraku tradition by having actors play, live, the role of puppets, the violence of appropriation becomes apparent. Arguably, this 'inversion' of live actors imitating puppets is not peculiar to Mnouchkine since, in the *Gidayu-kyogen* repertoire of Kabuki, there is a performance style called *Ningyoburi* (literally dancing in imitation of puppet) where the *Onnagata* (女形)[32] expresses scenes of emotional exuberance and urgency by having a *koken* (actor-handler) stand behind him as he performs as though he were a puppet. The *Ningyō Tsukai* (人形使い) would hold on to the *Onnagata* as though he were operating a puppet to achieve *ningyo rashisa* (日本舞踊, 新舞踊) (looking like a puppet). In such sequences, the *Onnagata* does not speak but is spoken for.[33]

Mnouchkine's style however confounds performance origin and seems a surface hybrid incarnation of both traditions reinforcing arguments of aesthetic mimesis. The soundscape resounds with this mimesis as the musical intentions are further conscribed to music conventions in Western performance practices of subordinating sound to narrative – where music adumbrates and *adds to* the emotional atmosphere of the narrative sequence. Arguably, what is heard as the soundscape of the performance is an aural experience of psychic tourism.

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[32] *Onnagata* are male actors who perform female roles in Japanese Kabuki theatre.
[33] See Ronald Cavaye et. al., *A Guide to the Japanese Stage*, 88 and Benito Ortolani, *The Japanese Theatre*, 181.

Among the most salient examples of imposing Western performance principles, specifically here of music (and musical accompaniment) is the 'mood' music created for scenes of death and loss (which occur frequently in *Tambours* particularly in the final scenes where characters are either murdered or are not spared the destructive wrath of the floods). In Chapter 16, tragedy occurs with the discovery of floating bodies across the river. Wang Po's aged father and younger brother are murdered by He Tao's henchmen as they overhear the plot to cause a breach in the dam thereby unleashing destruction on the villages. In this episode, the emotions of loss, pain and isolation are heightened by Lemêtre's soulful whistling and 'tapping' on the globulostrum [Chap 16 1:44:00].[34] Wang Po's frantic 'staccato-timed' screams counterpoint the legato whistling and fluid mid-tone harmonics produced by the globulostrum engendering, acoustically, a poignant moment of communal empathy. A similar melodic theme is employed in the final chapter, "La fin des fins," where the audience witnesses the demise of all characters as a sea of limp puppets float on a pool of water. In this scene, the lifeless marionette-doubles replace the live bodies earlier encountered in an act of counter-reversing corporeal reality thereby accentuating the metadramatic aspects and further reinforcing the theatricality and artifice of the performance. The silence of this surreal moment of deconstruction and destruction is broken with the refrain which now distinctly becomes synonymous with, and is leitmotif of, death and loss. Lemêtre whistles poignantly and taps on the nylon strings of the globulostrum as Bai Ju, the only surviving character and live performer on stage, enters the pool of water to retrieve the floating marionettes [Chap 20 2:09:30]. With this closing act, the end of a civilisation is heralded and a highly autoreflexive performance comes to a close.

The two sequences exemplify, among several others, Lemêtre's underlying philosophy for the music of the production. All instruments, regardless of cultural origin or performance philosophy, are made to subscribe to the Sameness of accentuating mood and adumbrating atmosphere. They also become musical motifs identified with characters or narrative events. Affect is then the primary function of music in this performance. Though speaking specifically of music theatre today, Anthony Sheppard's views about the exoticisation of Other sounds and their influence on Western music pertain to acoustic intercultural practice. Sheppard observes that much of Euro-American music in the twentieth century has appropriated, and consequently 'exoticised' these Other sounds. These influences could be detected in such factors as instrumentation, performance technique, intonation system, melodic and rhythmic style, texture, "and basic conceptions of what constitutes a musical sound" (Sheppard 13). These "basic conceptions" are most apparent in Lemêtre's soundtrack for what is 'Asian' in the

[34] I thank Prof Brian Singleton for assisting me with the email interview with Jean-Jacques Lemêtre. See email correspondence dated 11 Jan 2010.

music is merely the timbre and textural resonances of the instruments, and perhaps the performance techniques. This interest in, and fascination with, Eastern acoustics proves, for Sheppard, little more than simulacra since

> [f]or many, as was common in nineteenth-century European Orientalism, the exotic referent or inspirational source was encountered only slightly and was primarily a product of the imagination [...] Even when studied 'in depth,' exotic music continued to provide something of a sounding board for Euro-American composers from which to echolocate their own compositional interests. The exotic, and exotic models of music theatre, repeatedly offered conceptual spaces and specific performance structures for playing out the personal and political concerns of Euro-American composers (12).

Distinctly, *Tambours* is apt exemplification of how East Asian performance (and musical) practices remain as little more than sites of artistic excavation from which to re-present a new theatrical genre. In a production review by Carol Sorgenfrei, Mnouchkine is noted to term her work as an "imaginary kabuki" (255) for she is not interested in authentic re-creation or representation of the cultural art form but rather consider these 'sources' as means to relocate theatrical practices. Unconcerned with correct or 'authentic' representation, Mnouchkine believes that:

> [we] are not resuscitating past theatrical forms, commedia dell'arte or Chinese theatre. We want to reinvent the rules of the game which reveal daily reality, showing it not to be familiar and immutable but astonishing and transformable (Mnouchkine quoted in Atoun 13)[35]

Embedded in that remark is a romantic attitude toward the Orient – a romanticisation of aesthetic form and universal transference – which advents an epistemic 'violence' where the 'Orient' is displaced and removed only to be re-presented and spoken for via the theatrical language of (Western) Sameness. This refiguration of the Orient is not merely the visual appropriations of form and style but the sonic reconstruction of aural experience as evident in the soundtrack of *Tambours*. Sorgenfrei notes how *Tambours* represents real or fictional Asian characters in "a problematic way" (3) for this Chinese / Japanese (and Korean) representation is "disturbingly orientalist" (ibid.). In the performance, Korea, China, and Japan are staged as a cultural 'totality' whose own singularities have been erased. Although addressing Artaud's eclectic attraction to Yoga, Eastern religions, the Tibetan Book of the Dead, among other 'Oriental' fascinations, Rustom Bharucha notes that the specificities of an 'Oriental theatre' mattered less to him than its revelations; Artaud created his own 'East,' an imaginary Orient,

[35] Also cited in Adrian Kiernander, *Ariane Mnouchkine and the Théâtre du Soleil*, 89.

from which he derived sources of rejuvenation" (*Theatre* 14-5). Likewise, in *Tambours*, the historicity and specificities of various Asian performance (including musical) traditions mattered little; the Orient peoples are all 'mongolic' (and white skin could be masked by costume and synthetic faces), have identical performance practices, don similar costumes and play instruments that sound the same.

The Voice and Its Double: The Phonics of Silencing and the Replicated Voice

In one of the most compelling writings of post-colonial discourse, Gayatri Spivak advocates a location and locution of the subaltern – people and/or communities that are marginalised socially, politically or geographically from the hegemonic power structures that form the 'centre.'[36] In "Can the Subaltern Speak," Spivak argues that academic discourses, particularly postcolonial studies and specifically the Indian subaltern studies group, re-inscribe the centre-periphery dialectic in which it itself critiques. To Spivak, these attempts at 'speaking for' the subaltern and granting them an external 'voice' or speech invariably subscribes the plurality and heterogeneity of these groups to a totality, or as Spivak terms, a "monolithic 'same system'" (278). There is, located in these discourses, a logocentric assumption of a cultural collective in what is in reality a diversity of identities, and attempts to 'speak for' them entrenches deeper the peripheral and subordinate silence. As Spivak observes, "the substantive concern for the politics of the oppressed [...] can hide a privileging of the intellectual and of the 'concrete' subject of oppression that, in fact, compounds the appeal" (292). In the context of colonial production, "the subaltern has no history and cannot speak [...]" (287).

While Mnouchkine and her performative practices as well as Oriental philosophies about theatre do not constitute an academic discourse described by Spivak, the practices exemplified in *Tambours* illustrate her arguments about the silence of subalternities. In this production, the Orient (and its diversity of cultural representations performed) is regarded through discourse, both theatrical and linguistic, as a totality. The Orient in *Tambours* is one and Sameness, and it remains silent for it is spoken for, quite literally, by the colonial Self. The aural signifier of Mnouchkine's attempt to salvage the strangeness of the Other is to have the Orient-puppets voiced by other actors in French. Differing from the stage performance, the film/DVD adaptation of *Tambours* has puppet-actors mime (with minimal lip movement) to mirror-actors articulating French 'backstage.' While Mnouchkine's decision to have these

[36] The subaltern, according to Homi Bhabha who employs the term in accordance with Antonio Gramsci's definition, are the "oppressed, minority groups whose presence was crucial to the self-definition of the majority group." See *The Post-colonial Question* 210.

actor-puppets spoken for may stem from an attempted adherence to the Bunraku or *Ningyo-buri* tradition where a chanter (at times a group of chanters), known as the *Tayū*, chants the narrative and characters' parts, such an artistic decision ironically adumbrates Spivak's arguments about the (absent) voice of the subaltern; the subaltern(s) in *Tambours* cannot speak.

The silencing of the Other is indisputably one of the primary debates in interculturalism and identity politics for these 'voices' in performance are always necessarily 'disembodied' and 're-embodied' as hybrid or juxtaposed pronouncements. In *Tambours*, this fragmentation of body and voice revives (and seems to celebrate) the Cartesian mind-body duality where the voice is the instrument that enunciates the mind's thoughts. There arises further questions about consciousness in performance as a consequence of this schism: where is consciousness located in the actor-character – in the moving body or the voice that predicates expression, meaning, and intention? How then is cultural identity re-presented in the fragmented body – as wooden artifice that signifies an absence of the 'real' body (or a simulation of this artifice which further erases the immanence of the performing body) or as the sonorous flux of the French language and diacritics that seemingly communicate an immanent presence?

This epistemological uncertainty is accentuated in light of how Mnouchkine reverses the tradition of Bunraku by having live bodies mimic stilted puppets (or superficially re-producing the *Ningyo-juri* (人形の館) sequence in Kabuki). The spectacle (and spectacularity) of *Tambours* is the 'illusion' of the real simulating the artificial. A spectator's attention is thus drawn to the visual artistry and skill of the actors' movements and gestures. Theatricality is thus heightened and one remains consistently aware that the marionettes are real bodies in motion. While a spectator would possibly suspend disbelief and consume the fiction of the marionette spectacle, the disembodiment of the speaking voice from these bodies underscores the violent silencing of the Orient-other who is only visually represented by the live performing body. This dislocation of body and voice reinforces the notion of an imaginary Orient where alterity is mute. Writing of the significance of sound and the voice in pre-literate human society, John Shepherd notes "the paradigm of sound for people is the human voice, they seem to impute power and influence to the physical phenomena that surround their existence as they would impute it to the human voice" (*Whose Music*, 13). If so, authority is located in the voice, and that which dictates cultural identity, in *Tambours*, are those whose voices intone French accents and speak French.

This disembodiment of the voice from the body can generate, in listeners, a moment of psychological disjuncture or 'hysteria.' Such an experience first occurred with the invention of the telephone where the voice was, for the first time, heard without seeing its producing body.

Barbara Engh, in "Adorno and the Sirens: tele-phonographic bodies," recounts an experience in *Scientific American* of February 12, 1887 in which an anonymous reporter experienced a "sensation of nervous shock, somewhat akin to seasickness" (Engh 122). The 'shock' stems from a sense of a "material non-existence" (ibid.) in which, as inferred, the voice is as much material as it is existent and produced by a physical body. A kind of 'hysteria' is thus generated in this disembodiment. Embedded in that reaction is a political authority awarded to the voice in establishing individual identity (and by extension, cultural identity). The voice is not the language in which it speaks but the nuances of accent, intonation, timbre, tempo and inflections. Hysteria is hence a reaction to the disembodiment of voice from the body.

This hysteria resulting from the divorce of body and voice is also a consequence of its (artificial) reproduction; one's voice sounds distinctly 'different' after mediation and often lacks resonance since the chest cavity which serves as echo-chamber in live speech is absent. While the apparatus of disembodied and replicated voices are distinctly different in *Tambours* (since the voices of the actors behind the screens remain 'corporeal' and are not technologically reproduced though mediated), the concerns of reiteration and disembodiment are similar: reproduction is always already artificial and it silences fidelity and that which is 'natural.' The Orient presented in *Tambours* becomes a further imaginary for it is layered, mixed, and reproduced by white voices whose metaphorical equivalent is Adorno's phonograph. One can not only perceive the French language as the apparatuses that reify the imaginary Orient but Mnouchkine's directorial voice as that which bespeaks the cultural-other. Perhaps Adorno's reference to the gramophone's social function is an apt analogy of how the Other is merely a medium for the Self to echolocate its own concerns: "[w]hat the gramophone listener actually wants to hear is himself, and the artist merely offers him a substitute for the sounding image of his own person, which he would like to safeguard as a possession" ("Curves" 54).

What is heard is, as such, not merely what is communicated linguistically in the language employed in performance but the sounds by which meaning can be conveyed. In *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty begins the chapter "The Body as Expression, and Speech" by refuting the nominal view of language as symbols for thought, first formulated by Aristotle and given late credence by Saussure. The nominalist view stems from the Aristotelian notion that ideas exist in a pre-lingual state, and that as we speak, we peruse our mental lexicons in order to find the words that best accord with the thought we already have in mind. In this sense, meaning exists separate from the words used in expressing thought. Merleau-Ponty counters such a view with observations from experience, and emphasizes that words do not refer elsewhere for meaning, but that "the word has a meaning" (*Phenomenology* 177). For Merleau-Ponty the sounds of words constitute the meanings of words and they are not

divorced from thought. The akoumenological experience of French phonetics, its nasal phonemes, pure vowel sounds, diacritical accents, falling intonations, glides and approximants, voiced uvular fricatives ('r'), vocal liaisons (linking of syllables / absence of word boundaries), and silent letters mark the language with heritage and history, and more importantly cultural identity; there is, as commonly agreed, a homologous relationship between language and culture. While one would not so easily equate language with culture, in light of recent studies in linguistic anthropology, it is reasonable to agree that there is an intimate and complex relationship between both symbolic systems of (cultural) meaning – a relationship of both metonymy and metaphor. Language, as Geertz asserts, reflects social phenomena (12), and "a language is a part of a culture and a culture is a part of language; the two are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture (Brown 165).[37]

Language, however, is not merely the grammatical rules in existence but the *sounds* by which it distinguishes itself. One responds to the foreignness of the sounds of the Other's language. In *The Angel's Cry*, Michel Poizat writes about the experience of accent and its relationship with language and the Other. When one listens to an accent foreign to one's own, there is an opening of a dimension of *jouissance*, defined by Poizat as a kind of 'pure feeling' and a climatic ecstasy that borders on excess, transgression, and is beyond self-control,[38] for accent brings to the surface "vocal materiality, the vocal object as such; it becomes [...] an object of *jouissance* and this intrusion of *jouissance* into language subverts the signifying action of the spoken words" (103). While the experience of *jouissance*, in seeing *Tambours*, is debatable, Poizat's arguments about the accentuation of vocal materiality through a listening of accent encourages an understanding of the Orientalist acoustemologies already established by Lemetre's music. What is *heard* in the narrative exchanged by the characters is not merely the French language but French itself. Its 'otherness' to the Oriental spectacle is conceived akoumenologically – as phenomenological reaction.

By having yellow-skinned 'marionettes' echo French, a distinct aural-visual confrontation of cultures and cultural tradition results. While this does not necessarily mean that the Other of an-other culture cannot speak a language that is not (reductively) identified with the Self since the relationship between language and race / culture is a socially constructed one, in such an intercultural discourse where cultural traditions are appropriated, questions of authenticity and fidelity are made distinctly prominent (due to their heightened performativity in the now hybridized form). The performing body (as simulations of an 'Orient'

[37] The discourse of linguistic anthropology and the intricate relationship between language and culture is not the central concern of this chapter and is beyond its scope. It is here introduced to exemplify the dislocative experience of listening to French in Mnouchkine's intercultural experiment.

[38] See Poizat, "Pleasure and Jouissance" 3-7.

tradition) becomes deracinated, stripped of cultural identity, and where bodies become objectified as hollow men devoid of a (cultural) voice. What results in this aural-visual confrontation is a cultural 'schizophrenia' presented on the stage: there is disjuncture and dissonance between what one sees and what one listens to.

This akoumenological experience of 'dislocation' can be further understood as an Orientalist acoustics. The language (and its sounds) used in the performance underscores what is already a violent appropriation of Eastern cultural performance practices; it consumes the Other in a linguistic totality. As Levinas observes, "[t]he function of language would amount to suppressing "the other," who breaks this coherence and is hence essentially irrational [...] language would consist in suppressing the other, in making the other agree with the same" (*Totality* 73). The vocal expressions of the Orient Other, and with it identity, are not only silenced but replaced with (the sounds of) a 'foreign' language – the language of the colonizer. *Tambours'* Orientalist tendencies can thus be said to be established *both* by the language employed in performance and the sounds of this language. It is an acoustic colonisation of the 'foreign' body that reifies the visual appropriation.

The linguistic choice of *Tambours* exemplifies language's interpellative abilities where the other is 'called-into-being' through ideology that precedes utterance.[39] In "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," Louis Althusser writes of power structures, such as the state and/or religion, employing ideology to repress and govern individuals by converting them into subjects through a process of interpellation. This 'subjectification' of the individual is achieved through the manipulation of language codes as imperatives where the other is 'called into being' and recognises its own (subjectified) existence only by the process of responding to the imperative expression. Consequently, inherent in language is always a culture's ideology and "all ideology hails or interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects" (Althusser 173). In Althusser's mise en scène of interpellation, individuals are always already interpellated by ideology as subjects, and are "always already subjects" (176).

Language embeds, a priori, cultural ideology through distinct and unique semantic associations. While there can be different linguistic signifiers in different languages to signify the same object, what is conceived as a signified is ideologically and culturally specific. In *Tambours*, the Orient is subjectified through interpellation from the utterance of French as the language of performance. While the interpellative processes are somewhat different from those described by Althusser, the Orient subject is undoubtedly called into being through the verbal expression of French voice-overs. The ideologies entrenched *as* and *in* that language, along with the cultural associations of French being a language of the coloniser, call into

[39] For a more sustained discussion on ideology and state apparatuses, see Althusser's "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*.

'existence' the Orient Other in this performance; this Other is, as already established, as imaginary as it is 'real.' The Other in *Tambours* is realised as a mute acknowledgement of its subjectification where interpellation finds corporeality in the marionette Other responding, as mime, to the vocal resonances and articulations of the paired (French) doppelganger. The Other does not speak and he exists only as he is spoken for, spoken about and spoken to through ideology in language.

The Intercultural Monologue / Dialogue & The Face-to-Face Encounter

This is the concept of language that Levinas rejects for this is language that is merely communication (ideas, rationality, empirical realities). This is language that originates in the non-verbal command the face of the approaching other represents: 'Do this...' (Hutchens 47) and is consequent of the need to make sense of the Other. As such, language originates in the face-to-face relationship and the other appears and its appearance calls one to respond. Yet there is an ethical language of which it is a 'preoriginal' phenomenon, and where it is the only appropriate form of language that is able to describe the prelinguistic expression of the face-to-face encounter. It is the language of the face that resists murder and demands a responsibility for and an ethics of. It is this absence of that ethical language, and the assertion of expressive language, that the epistemic violence of appropriation results in *Tambours*.

The distinctive features of speaking in the face-to-face encounter (appeal, call, interpellation, the imperative, the vocative, and personal pronouns), consequent of a need to establish a relationship with the Other, exemplify a speaking which speaks beyond that of speaking about something. It speaks for and speaks as the Other and, in the example of *Tambours*, re-inscribes the narrative of the Orient Other while erasing cultural signifiers and re-writing identity. Language and speech (the sonic qualities of the utterance, the timbre, accents, extensions, glides, and rhythms) are a means by which alterity is contained and conceived as Sameness subscribed to the totality of translation and translatability. It is, as Levinas acutely recognises, the Other that is 'outside' of the Self which language seeks to identify and speak for so that there can be "a common genus as an essence of human being" (Wyschogrod 192). Yet language is a means by which the Other is recognised (and here Levinas would mean an ethical language).

> Language institutes a relation irreducible to the subject-object relation: the revelation of the other [...] The other called upon is not something represented, is not a given, is not a particular, though one side is already open to generalization. Language, far from presupposing universality and

> generality, first makes them possible. Language presupposes interlocutors, a plurality." (Levinas, *Totality* 73)

Ethical language, as Hutchens explains of Levinas, may "originate in the disjuncture between what I think the other person is and the effect exposure to them has on me" (50). Language is the means by which an interlocutor is conceived and is the attempt to invoke his presence for all language stems from a need to express and respond to the face-to-face encounter. It is

> an exchange of ideas about the world, with the mental reservations it involves, across the vicissitudes of sincerity and deceit it delineates, presupposes the originality of the face without which, reduced to an action among actions whose meaning would require and infinite psychoanalysis or sociology, it could not commence (Levinas, *Totality* 202)

As such, it is in the face-to-face encounter that an ethics is conceived. The face, for Levinas, holds peculiar significance that marks difference which precedes rationalism and utterance, and must be accorded an ethical language. In attempting to speak to, describe, or comprehend the face of the other, one subjects the Other to that totality which is ontological reality. An encounter with the face of the Other is an experience that compels a relationship. It "speaks to me and thereby invites me to a relation" (ibid. 198). This relation is a violent one where demands of the Other are placed on the Self / I. As Levinas describes, "the Other faces me and puts me in question and obliges me" (ibid. 207). The face can evoke such a primordial, pre-linguistic obligation and meaning because the presentation of the Other himself exceeds "the idea of the other in me [and it is here named the] face [...] The face of the Other at each moment destroys and overflows the plastic image it leaves me, the idea existing to my own measure ... It expresses itself (ibid. 50-51). The face is "a living presence; it is expression" (ibid. 66) and "the life of expression consists in undoing the form in which the existent, exposed as a theme, is thereby dissimulated. The face speaks. The manifestation of the face is already discourse" (ibid.).

Tambours exemplifies the violence that expressive language executes on the Other, and where the face is muted. The face of the Other is (quite literally) regarded as 'artificial' (and artifice) for the Orient is presented as latex masks on white skin. It is, symbolically, a reversed erasure of the Orient as it presents the Orient as mannequin Other manipulated by the Occidental body (and certainly Occidental concerns). The Oriental 'puppets' are thus apt metaphors for an Orientalist reading of the performance. The manipulation is one that is executed both by the *zukais* and the actors who perform these Oriental characters. In attempting to locate a theatre of the Orient, Mnouchkine's intended celebration of Oriental practices engenders a reversal of intentions for such an artistic and creative adaptation of

Bunraku only serves to reify the Orient as a mirror 'dummy' to the West – a doll-like 'plaything' for which to be manoeuvred and handled. The Other's face is erased and the face cannot speak.

The ethical language is thus unwritten for the face, as discourse, is absent. There is, in *Tambours*, an absence of an intercultural dialogue; there is only a monologue in French. The Self speaks for the Other in the language of its own. It removes the tongue of the Other and speaks only to itself and about itself, and consequently thematises the Other. The Other, when thematised, becomes negated for it becomes the subject of the Self in the discussion to which it participates (Hutchens 50). Here, the French language exemplifies a violent treatment of the other for it attempts to speak (as) the Other. While Levinas believes that one can never actually talk about the other, since the face is an enigma and the other person is more than and other than what one says it is (Hutchens 50, Levinas *Totality* 47), the dominant linguistic discourse in *Tambours* does not even speak about the Other and assumes its silence and absence by having it spoken for. The Self speaks to itself through a refraction of the Other. The Other is imaginary and masked as façade. While Levinas believes that the face-to-face encounter compels us to recognise our responsibilities to them because 'I' am uniquely bound to the Other (*Basic Philosophical Writings* 17), the Orient here is imagined and its face is never seen.

"Do Not Murder Me": Intercultural Violence and the 'Death' of the Other

Tambours ends with a performative violence that mimics, and is metaphorical of, the violence of appropriation, reinvention, transformation, and silencing of the Other. In a symbolic act of annihilation and destruction of the towns and its inhabitants, *zukais* enter the pool of water and with an extended bamboo poles stab random spots while stirring a tempest. Shortly after, stuffed puppets are seen flung across the stage and they fall, like inert beings, on the pool; they float silently and lifelessly on the water [Chap 20]. The dissonant soundscape of this performative moment [Chap 20 2:06:49], consisting of the high-strung tonalities of the rhythmic unmelodic beatings of the globulostrum, the chromatic 'ahs' chanted by Lemêtre, the metallic sounds of thin aluminium sheets being flung in wave-live motion, and the screeches of clashing cymbals, diminish to an eerie silence with only the sounds of the wind that serve as a sound bridge to the montage of motionless marionettes.

The silencing and murder of the Other occurs in *Tambours*. The violence is one that is not only visual but aural as well – it is demise enacted by sound. Consequently *Tambours* remains an apt exemplification of Western intercultural practices where the East remains imagined not only as a distant culture but a remote past whose qualities are mimed and mimicked as exotic and fantastic, exemplifying Bharucha's critique of Western intercultural

practices as "a general curiosity for the exotic" (*Theatre and the World* 2). In attempting to pay homage to the Orient Other, Mnouchkine and Lemêtre's novel reinvention and reinterpretation of Asian performance practices, both musical and theatrical, engender questions raised by William Sheppard about cross-cultural pollinations in music: "does a greater degree of verisimilitude to the exotic source show a greater respect for the other, or is imitation a sign of cultural arrogance and imperialism?" (12). While Mnouchkine's deep conviction that the theatre is Oriental may lead one to regard her romance with the Orient as a desire to 'liberate' its subalternity and 'voicelessness' in theatrical discourse, the idealised re-presentations of the East impresses further the misperception that the Orient is a homogenous collective, one that can be essentialised and consumed for aesthetic rejuvenation. The trauma experienced by the characters in the closing moments of *Tambours* is, for some, possibly metonymic of the condition of cultural trauma experienced in such an Orientalist paradigm.

Chapter 3

(Echo)Locating Other-Shakespeares: An Aesthetics of Pop & the Ear of the Other

The Ear of the Other:
Acoustic Signatures and Otobiographies

> "To hear him, one must have a keen ear [...] it is the ear of the other that signs [...] The ear of the other says me to me and constitutes the *autos* of my autobiography" (Derrida, *The Ear of the Other* 51).

In taking note(s) of the Orient, the Occidental ear hears but does not listen. It transcribes a biography of the Orient Other via a refashioning, and seeks to listen to that which the self can seek to comprehend through the discourse of (Western musical) language. The ear of the Orient is made deaf to itself, resounded for by sonorities echoed by the Occident. As heard in Mnouchkine's *Tambours*, the Orient is distant, past, tradition(al) and pre-modern. Yet this signature of the intercultural Orient is being re-appropriated as seen in recent performance histories that challenge Western modes and definitions of the intercultural. Sailing on the tides of economic and cultural globalisation, and riding on the cross-currents of exchange that flow poly-directionally, with cultural authority constantly at interplay, intermixing and intermingling, prominent East Asian directors have emerged to capitalise on an acultural and ahistorical global (festival) market that consumes the East as exotic and the West as bizarre. The rise of these 'Asian' interculturalisms is testimony to the myopic misperceptions of early intercultural theories about the unidirectional flows from Eastern sources to Western targets as postulated by Patrice Pavis. Japanese director Yukio Ninagawa (蜷川幸雄), known for his 'Japanesque' tactics of appropriating, adapting and transforming Western classical texts for a Japanese market (as well as an international market craving for a new glocal – the cosmopolitan Japan), and Chinese avant-garde director Lin Zhaohua (林兆華) have redefined the theory and practice of interculturalism. In their works, which have become known locally and globally, the parameters and boundaries of imagining the intercultural have been reconceived, and the contestations on cultural politics relocated. These manifestations of an 'Asian' interculturalism challenge the ways in which the East is heard by the Other(s), and interrogates the 'ears' by which one uses to listen to the intercultural. Derrida's rhetorical questions remind one of the need for self-reflexivity when we listen to the textualities of cultural identities:

> Is it a question of the same ear, a borrowed ear, the one that you are lending me or that I lend myself in speaking? Or rather, do we hear, do we understand each other already with another ear? The ear does not answer. Who is listening to whom right here? (*Ear* 35).

Writing more broadly about the nature of textuality (speech and writing) and logocentrism, but accessed through a discussion about autobiographies, Derrida claims it is (the) impossible to consider the biography of a 'philosopher' (and here Derrida refers specifically to Nietzsche) as merely a corpus of empirical accidents "that leaves both a name and a signature outside a system which would itself be offered up to an immanent philosophical reading" (*Ear* 5). There exists a chasm between the proper name and the name that has become discourse; between the biography that is immanent, spoken as and through the self, and the biography which is now accessed as that which is written and read. Derrida notes that an 'autobiography,' understood to be that which is "the life that he lives and tells to himself" (*Ear* 9) cannot be effectively constituted by 'I' since it is contractual and the contract must be heard by an-Other that consequently acknowledges and honours it with a signature. This signature, as narration of a life, is listened to and heard. As Derrida expounds,

> [...] you cannot think the name or names of Friedrich Nietzsche, you cannot hear them before the reaffirmation of the hymen, before the alliance or wedding ring of the eternal return. You will not understand anything of his life, nor of his life and works, until you hear the thought of the "yes, yes" (*Ear* 13).

'Otobiography' introduces the central tenets of Derrida's philosophy and the disprivileging of the primacy and immanence of speech over writing, a position long kept sacred by Western metaphysics. Yet more importantly, the portmanteau (of 'autobiography' and 'otology') opens an acoustic consideration (of speaking and listening) to the construction of texts and textuality as it interrogates the law of genre to show how "life and discourse are shown to intersect the mode of contingency" (Ulmer 116). Further responding to questions put forward by Christine McDonald, Derrida expounds on the transformation of *auto* to *oto* as a process that involves oneself and another since "I speak myself to myself in a certain manner, and my ear is thus immediately plugged into my discourse and my writing" (*Ear* 49-50). Yet the signature of an otobiography takes place only when an-other hears and listens. "Ears transcribe" (*Ear* 36) and "the ear of the other says to me and constitutes the *autos* of my autobiography" (*Ear* 51). It is only then that the signature of the one that speaks takes place; "the addressee signs with his/her ear, an organ for perceiving difference" (ibid.).

Derrida's concerns about the ear are not of the musical, sonorous and sonic qualities of listening and voice; neither is Derrida using the ear as a metaphor but as a corporeal and physiological fixity of the body that listens and signs its identity. It is also a call for the ear to listen for the 'noises' in a text where the ear needs to listen to the unpredictable, the uncanny, the 'unheard,' the heterogenousness and 'différance' of each utterance – the chaos that can

threaten the order and authority of the logoi (Cobussen, para 3). Listening to these 'noises' yields the process of deconstruction. The call for attentive listening to the heterogeneity of texts, their polytonalities and polysemous qualities, echo concerns in soundscape studies of the need to listen *deeply* to acoustic texts and sonorous reverberations in the environment.[1] More significantly, Derrida's ear advents a critical consideration of the particle 'auto' (or reflexivity) and the otological considerations in enunciating a self identity (fashioned as an autobiography). The inscribed self is heard, validated, and signed by an-other's ear. "It is an ear [...] that dictates to you what you are writing at this moment when you write in the mode of what is called 'taking notes'" (Derrida, *Ear* 35).

Following Derrida's question of the same and borrowed ear, and of who is listening to whom, this chapter examines the 'ears' of East Asian directors Yukio Ninagawa and Lin Zhaohua, or their otobiographies. It seeks to consider how Lin and Ninagawa both listen, bespeak, and compose the intercultural as exchanges not, possibly, as re-appropriation and /or resistance but as counter-appropriations of Western 'pop' sounds and tunes that are unfettered from the (sacred) authorities of tradition and cultural history. It will examine how both internationally renowned directors, whose fame have been built on 'transcultural' performances that appeal to a local and global audience, listen to the West with borrowed ears while retaining an 'ear' for acoustic self-fashioning. While the previous chapter considers the hegemonic discourses of Western acoustic intercultural practice located as schizophonia, a term coined first by R. Murray Schafer and developed further by Steven Feld to describe the dislocation of traditional music from their source and contexts, and the ways these sounds are subsequently appropriated or modified without the permission or collaboration of those who originally made the music ("Notes" 31),[2] this chapter will examine the strategies not of resistance but of counter-appropriation to the dictates of cultural imperialism evidenced in intercultural theory and practice. It will examine specifically the soundscapes of Western pop and classical music in the works of Lin and Ninagawa, and the ways these sounds reconceive an acoustic interculturalism by means of a 'pop' aesthetic.

The Intercultural 'No-Style': Lin Zhaohua's *Richard III* as Pop(ular) Aesthetic

Lin Zhaohua remains as China's most significant and prominent director of the post-Cultural Revolution age. His productions have revived Chinese classics and expanded the repertoire and

[1] This view has been discussed thoroughly in Chapter 2.

[2] For further details on this concept of schizophonia, see the concluding chapter.

styles of Chinese Theatre, which have till the 1980s, been prescribed only by Chairman Mao Zedong's (毛泽东) 'Model Theatres' (consisting of five Beijing Operas [京剧 *jingju*], two modern ballets and one symphonic work).[3] More importantly, Lin is celebrated for his endeavours in foraying the West for artistic inspiration and sources to refashion Chinese Theatre, thereby creating a unique interculturalism that differs from Western conceptions of performance 'hybridities.' Often termed avant-garde and experimental, Lin favours *huaju* (话剧) (a contemporary form of 'spoken' drama more akin to Western style drama developed in the early twentieth century that is often regarded as antithetical to the sung poetic style of Chinese music theatre or *xiqu* [戏曲]) and modern minimalist recreations in place of traditional dramatic forms such as *jingju* or *kunqu* (崑曲). His style is often considered to be an eclectic synthesis of abstraction and realism, combining Stanislavskian systems, modern improvisation, and narrative acting styles from Chinese theatre. Regarded as the pioneer of small-theatre modern drama and the modernist movement in China,[4] Lin advocates an 'un-style' that is his style. In an interview, Lin proudly proclaims "I have no style, no, not at all" (Li, Xiao, China.org.cn) because

> [t]he style forming process is vivid, but once it is formed, it turns stiff. So I have no style. Every drama has its own unique style. I think a director does not work for his or her own style, but for the drama itself. He or she will just represent what he or she has felt. I believe in and respect my own feelings, and at the same time, I hope I will have new experiences. That is my production logic (ibid.).

Directing the Beijing People's Art Theatre, *Hamlet* (哈姆莱特) (1990)[5] and *Richard III* (理查三世) (2001) are among Lin's most 'radical' experiments in *huaju* Shakespeares ("Shakespeare in China" 4). In *Richard III*, Lin challenges the Chinese audience, while relocating (mis)conceptions of international audiences, with minimalist, symbolically driven, inter-media, 'post-modern' adaptation of Shakespeare's work. Lin's notion of interculturality is not a mutual 'exchange' of cultural forms and performance practices; it is neither hybridity nor an excavationary intraculturalism of Chinese theatrical forms for a contemporary concern. Lin's affirmation of the value of Chinese theatre in the global market is not a reactionary

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[3] See Chen, Xiaomei, "The Making of a Revolutionary Stage" in *East of West: Cross Cultural Performance and the Staging of Difference* for an overview of Mao's 'Model Theatre.' See also Colin Mackerras, "Theatre and the Masses" in *Chinese Theatre: From Its Origins to the Present Day*.

[4] See "Bios" at the *Shakespeare Performance in Asia* website. <http://web.mit.edu/shakespeare/asia/bios/#lin>

[5] The full production video of *Hamlet* (1990) can be viewed at *Shakespeare Performance in Asia* <http://web.mit.edu/shakespeare/asia/collections/catalogue2.html>.

'preservation' of traditional styles and forms, nor is it resistance of Western formats and practices. Instead Lin's practice can be said to be an 'unconscious' relation of cultural texts that further accentuate his characteristic style of 'no-style.' It is an appropriation of a 'global' text for a 'local' concern – unintentional or otherwise. Chinese theatre, reflecting the dynamic metamorphosis of China in the recent decades, must embrace change and that is Lin's intercultural approach. Instead, the play's concerns are primary to Lin and that is what is evoked in his performances. Like Lin's production of *Hamlet*, *Richard III*'s thematic concerns of social and political strife, usurpation and aggression are transposed onto the Chinese stage with events in modern Chinese history paralleling those of Shakespeare's play. In accordance with Lin's production logic, the text 'spoke' for itself. With the Machiavellian Richard looking distinctively like Chairman Mao and spotting an identical cropped half-bald hairstyle, Lin's *Richard III* drew attention to the 'cross-cultural' villainous qualities of political players as the play dramatised images of victims and accomplices through a series of dramaturgical actions and symbols. The theme of this production, as Lin notes, centres around the ways in which "those who lack vigilance against schemes are the conspirator's accomplices, though they can also find themselves among the victims [...] those who are close to you are in fact your never-expected enemies" ("Shakespeare in China," 4). In Lin's production, the line between victim and perpetrator dissolves.

While one could say *Richard III* remarked upon the 'blindness' and 'paralysis' of the Chinese people which consequently assisted the rise of Mao and the Communist Party heralding a period of cultural revolution which led to the oppression of theatre and the arts, Lin did not stage the performance as 'chinoiserie' nor did it conform to stereotypes of Chinese theatrical traditions to accentuate these Chinese concerns. Like *Hamlet* before there were no Westernized make-up, wigs, prosthetic noses, or "doublet and hose" costumes characteristic of early *huaju* Shakespeare in China.[6] The characters were modern Chinese removed from the exotic conceptions of Chinese theatrical representation. In place of these stereotypes were the urban clothes and natural faces of contemporary China. Lin's *Richard III* could thus be regarded as ahistorical, and atraditional, reflecting perhaps the global post-modern 'popularisation' (and popularity) of Shakespeare's works. The observation takes on keener significance when one considers Shakespeare's play to be a historical fiction (or fictional historicisation) of Richard III of England. Stripped of its cultural and historical burden Lin frees the play to wander in the play of infinite signifiers.

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[6] An example of this can be seen in *Antony and Cleopatra* (1984) directed by Hu Weimin and produced by the Shanghai Youth Spoken Drama Company. See "Shakespeare in China: Old Man Sha in the Middle Kingdom," *Internet Shakespeare Editions*. See also Li Ruru, *Shashibiya: Staging Shakespeare in China*, 160-196 for a discussion on Chinese performances of Shakespeare and the attempt to retain authenticity.

Lin Zhaohua's modern adaptations of Shakespeare do not suffer from the postcolonial hangovers of continental European and American interculturalisms which gaze at the Other through tinted lenses of an ideal and idyllic pre-industrial culture steeped in magic, mysticism, ritual and rites, further laden with performative guilt, remorse and penitence. Instead, Lin's adaptations reveal a contemporary consciousness and awareness of China's theatre in the local and global markets. Seen in Lin's *Richard III*, there is no overwhelming desire to preserve tradition as immutable aesthetic forms to be marketed for a new emerging middle class market in China, or for a global audience that now gazes upon China with wonder and trepidation. While not always well received locally (and reception to Lin's plays is often mixed),[7] Lin's aestheticism has lent him the term a "harbinger of strangeness" and "rebel of orthodoxy" (Hu 158). The production's 'forward-looking' attitudes, reflected in his dramaturgical strategies and theatrical modernisations break free from the shackles of chronopolitical interculturalisms – a romanticisation of traditional styles and practices that retain cultural 'authenticity.' In view of this 'avant-garde' approach to Chinese theatre, Lin's productions resist accusations of auto-orientalism that have been laid upon his Japanese contemporary Yukio Ninagawa, with the latter often being said to be 'Japanesque' in his interpretations of Shakespeare, or to flout the time-honoured and sacred practices of Noh and Kabuki. Lin's *Richard III* exemplifies instead Simon Frith's notion of a 'pop aesthetic' – an aesthetic of the modern global consumer. Though referring to popular musics and their infusion with traditional ethnic sounds, Frith's concept of a pop aesthetic reveals how all countries' popular music are inevitably shaped by international influences and institutions, multinational capital and technology, and by global pop norms and values (Frith 2), 'Pop' is commercial. This concept is further expanded by David Brackett who, in his study of popular music, suggests that "an attitude towards art that privileges functional use over contemplation of form" (Brackett 159) can be considered a 'pop aesthetic.' Brackett postulates such a view in antithesis to what Pierre Bourdieu terms 'legitimate' art works – works that extend a 'pure gaze' or an attention to the formal features rather than to context or function. Bourdieu believes that the acquisition and development of 'taste' is a result of a conjunction between class background and academic training. Consumers with high cultural capital acquire this 'pure gaze' in connection with 'legitimate' works of art and then extend such a mode of perception to less 'legitimate' works, termed 'popular.'[8] 'Popular,' by such modes of evaluation, is always therefore less 'legitimate.' This distinctly resounds with Lin's artistic strategies that have incited theatre traditionalists to decry Lin's works as uncharacteristic of Chinese *xiqu* and therefore less 'legitimate.'

[7] See Li Ruru, *Shashibiya* 5 for a description of the audience's reaction to 哈姆莱特 (*Hamlet*).
[8] See Bourdieu, *Distinction* 1-96.

In *Richard III*, Lin's 'pop' strategy lies in the de-historicisation of Shakespeare's history play, and a revision of early representations of Shakespeare on the Chinese stage. Seen dramaturgically, the scenography of sparse sets, symbolic objects (for example, wired figurines in Act 5 (Disc 2, Chap 6 00:55:00) that at once represent soldiers on the battlefield but also the masses that have now deserted Richard, as well as the ghostly reincarnations of the many he has murdered), monotone black 'Mao' suits and jackets, and the use of video installation at points in the performance transpose the play to a contemporary postmodern condition of dislocation, absence, and ahistoricity. Yet more interestingly, and of greater concern to this thesis, is Lin's aesthetic of 'pop' music distinctive in this production. While attempting to remove specific cultural references in the scenography and mise en scène to evoke a 'timelessness' and relevance of the play's concerns to a contemporary China, Lin employs, curiously, Western pop songs and classical genres that consequently reveal a unique acoustic intercultural strategy. Employed as a performative strategy, the pop songs reveal a counter-appropriation that at once invents new performance contexts as it re-invents meaning via referencing, association, and intertextuality. These citational meanings exist on a predatory relationship to a global audience's acquaintance and familiarity with the tunes. Unlike traditional musics, pop songs embody aesthetic codes defined by the global market economy – they exist for a mass audience not delimited by geo-political or socio-cultural margins; the means of production further exemplify its transcultural nature. They are often defined by their technologico-economic status (Middleton 4). Pop music is thus a sonic product of a modern, industrialised context that is ontologically dissimilar to sounds of the rural, pre-industrial settings. In many ways, the acoustemological properties of pop music render it example par-excellence of the global acoustic intercultural; it is an "international phenomenon" (Frith 2). Pop music is also often considered to be 'low art,' one that is produced for the masses and therefore 'inferior'; its ontology defined in terms of Otherness to more legitimate genres such as folk or art music, or as Richard Middleton proposes "the nature of popular music is established through comparison with something else, an absent Other."[9] Despite the problems of defining what pop music is, its relation to the masses and the idea of 'grassroots' music for the people form the predominant perception and reception of its place as social artefact.

"Harp not on that string":
Prog Rock and an Aesthetics of Pop

[9] See Richard Middleton, "'Roll over Beethoven?' Sites and Soundings on the Music Historical Map," *Studying Popular Music* 3-33 for the problems of defining pop music.

Lin's use of Anglo-American pop-rock music reverberates with (inter)cultural implications on the Chinese stage. It interrogates the notion of a globalised theatre and the ways that the West has thus far conceived of an interculturalism as heard by the Western ear. Anglo- American pop-rock music, as culture industry, readily dissipates geo-political or socio-cultural boundaries, technological ones notwithstanding since pop, unlike the sounds of tradition, is more global in nature though they remain archetypes of a Western music paradigm. Lin's extensive employment of pop-rock sounds reconfigures intercultural practice that has thus far been heard as 'exotic' frequencies and explosive drummings of a pre-modern soundscape.

One of two pop-rock music motifs employed in *Richard III* is Pink Floyd's "The Show Must Go On" (1979).[10] Used twice in the performance, the song assumes a sonic significance whose performance, amplified over booming speakers, becomes a dramatic event of a 'play-within-a-play.' At both junctures, the song is played at deafening volumes and the dramatic action is momentarily paused (since the song is played when a scene closes and actors depart backstage). Pink Floyd's celebrated song from their signature album *The Wall* (1979) thus takes precedence as the vectors of signification shift from the visual plane to an acoustic one, relocating reception sensibilities as the aural is given prominence in the generation of dramatic meaning. This amplification of harmonised voices, unlike those of the actors who rely on more 'traditional' Stanislavskian modes of character embodiment and unmediated vocal projection, takes on performative meaning as it becomes incorporated into the dramatic narrative yet, at the same time, becomes a heightened moment of afictionality. The deafening levels of amplification cannot but intrude on the audience's aural comfort zones (since one has no ear 'lids' to shut out sound) while the augmented harmonising tessitura, akin to the vocal patterns of the Beach Boys, surprise as they vocalise a language of a different cultural origin to the performance language, one that is even possibly considered antithetical in today's East-West geo-political stage.

Song, as a musical phenomenon, invites a potential audience into an act of listening. While this is also true of spoken language, the act of listening to a song entails a special kind of listening distinct from speech. It requires a unique attention to the complex association of word and music, and engenders a distinctive response. Song, as semiotic text, can be understood, simplistically, as the combination of organised sound or acoustic signatures, and words. As performative text, therefore, both are signifying planes understood as language – musicological and linguistic. In *The Experience of Songs*, Mark Booth claims that "we appoint ourselves the addressees" when we hear a song sung (14). We have an impulse to attend to the

[10] See *Youtube*, "Pink Floyd – The Show Must Go On (live)" <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M-vEBmDWzvA> for the MTV video of "The Show Must Go On."

sung words as though they were addressed to us in particular. Song "fosters some degree of identification between singer and audience" and can "annihilate" distance between them (Booth 14-15). The willing act of listening is then an acknowledgement of (and engagement with) the presence not merely of the song but of the singer as well. Listening is a psychological act where the exchange of music between the singer and audience is a communicative process that occurs within space and time. It is, as Barthes notes, a spatio-temporal phenomenon occurring in an inter-subjective space where "I am" also means "Listen to me" ("Listening" 245-6). The act of listening thus necessitates interpretation and decoding of how and what is communicated. It is to make available to the conscious the "underside" of meaning (what is experienced, postulated, intentionalised as hidden) (ibid. 249).

As linguistic signifier, "The Show Must Go On" assumes a dramatic role in the performance context as it becomes an alternate narrative that critiques, as it reflects, the unfolding dramatic situation. In what is Act I.iv of Shakespeare's text, 克拉伦斯 (*kelalunsi*, Clarence), the brother of 理查 (*li cha*, Richard) is locked in the Tower of London here cleverly constructed as a gauze box structure on wheels (Disc 1, Chap 4 00:37:44). Richard's hired murderers enter and debate about how Clarence should be assassinated despite having reservations and suffering from the pangs of conscience. Clarence awakes from his sleep and deliberates with the murderers while pleading for his life believing that Richard would reward them for sparing his life. He hears from them that it is Richard instead who has plotted this treacherous act. Following the murderers act of 'spinning' the tower, Clarence is murdered, stylistically, with a 'clap' as he is asked to "look behind." An announcement, "Clarence is dead," echoes in the style of Chinese eunuchs issuing an official decree in imperial China. As the actors clear the stage, Richard, who has been silently seated stage front left viewing the unfolding of his schemes, emerges to direct the actors – an autoreflexive moment that can be read as a metadramatic performance of his machinations. Pink Floyd's signature song creeps into the acoustic space as the volume intensifies and stage lights fade to black. A video sequence of fish out of water struggling for life, with extreme close-ups of mouths gasping for air and fins flipping frantically, is projected onto the stage wall as Clarence's spirit walks across the stage. To this provocative imagery, the members of Pink Floyd harmonise to the tune that now becomes a commentary on the murder that has just taken place:

> Ooooh, Ma, Oooh Pa
> Must the show go on?
> Ooooh, Pa. Take me home, Take me home, Take me home
> Ooooh, Ma. Let me go, Let me go, Let me go

There must be some mistake
I didn't mean to let them
Take away my soul.
Am I too old, is it too late?

Ooooh, Ma, Oooh Pa
Where's the feeling gone?
Ooooh, Ma, Oooh Pa
Will I remember the songs?
Oooooh, waah
The show must go on

As Booth suggests, the song invites the listener into a relationship; it speaks and it narrates an experience that is to be shared. Lyrically, "The Show Must Go On" trivialises the death of Clarence as it assumes his 'voice.' The listener enters into an empathetic relationship with the now deceased Clarence whose narrative, reflected by the song's lyrics, discloses regret at inaction and a premature death ("I didn't mean to let them / Take away my soul / Am I too old, is it too late?). The phrase "The show must go on" could be heard as Clarence's resigned awareness that in spite of his death, the show 理查三世 (*Richard III*) must go on or it could be double-voiced as Richard's declaration of the forward motion of his machinations to the climax of his coronation as King of England. Whichever way it is heard, the lyrics adumbrate the dramatic action through an afictional performance of song.

The song is featured yet again immediately after the agreement, following how the Duke of Buckingham "argues conscience" (III.vii.173),[11] to have the Duke of Gloucester assume the throne of England (III.vii) (Disc 2 Chap 3 00:26:28). The scene closes with Buckingham rallying the people to acknowledge Richard's ascension to the throne. The live chant of the citizens, seen entrapped within the Tower of London, merges with an amplified recording of voices that resemble the passionate cries of the people at a Communist rally. Richard ambles across the stage taking periodic bows to the audience as the exclamations of the people overwhelm the auditorium creating a uniquely political soundscape through acoustic intertext. The recorded chant of the voices yelling 加油 (*jia you* – literally means 'refuelling' but used in the Chinese language as a rallying cry of encouragement) in constant tempo blends with Pink Floyd's opening harmonised chant "Oooh Ma, Oooh Pa." As the stage lights dim and Richard walks offstage, a video sequence of ants scampering hastily in predetermined paths is

[11] All references are taken from the RSC edition of *Richard III*.

projected. The black bodies against a blue surface increase in numbers till they fill the projection, and while the video image is unmistakably metaphorical of the would-be oppressed and mindless English citizens under Richard's rule, and simultaneously indexical of their frenetic state of mind, Pink Floyd's song underscores the inevitability of the tragedy that is to befall on them in the times to come. The persona of the song assumes now a different voice of the people whose coerced actions are considered "some mistake" that is to "take away [their] soul[s]."

Songs, however, should not only be understood as narrative text (lyrics) but as *music*, where the song's musical properties, through a musicological study, can yield meaning in context and generate 'co-performative' meaning. In Roger Water's composition, the ambitus is cyclical and the chordal progression repetitive.[12] In bars 1 to 6, the tonic chord G and the subdominant C are repeated and the bass line is an exact copy in every bar. This stylistic repetition is also observed musically in the expression "Ooh Ma, Ooh Pa" with the tones and rhythmic beat repeated (bars 7 and 8, 20 and 21, 22 and 23, and 24). The cyclical effect is produced by the disjuncture in the tempo indicated by the change in metre of the verse (from 4/4 to 3/4) and the legato vowel expressions are now broken by rapid semi-quavers. Akoumenologically, this creates a sense of motion opposed to the staticity produced by the semibreves of the "Ooos." The semi-quaver transition breaks the established rhythm and further emphasises a tedious cyclicity with the verse composed predominantly of an interplay between two notes E and D. These musical patterns, along with the dynamic drumming that establishes the prescribed rhythms, create a sense of forward motion as a cyclical inevitability, underscoring the inescapable reality that the show must go on. The music, as heard, thus works in concordance with the lyrics to engender a dramatic foreboding acoustically.[13]

While of peripheral concern to Lin's 'pop' acoustic strategy, this sonically dense and complex scene (Disc 2 Chap 2 00:15:30) reverberates with auditory meaning and is exemplary of how soundscapes can signify. A parallel of III.vii, Richard and Buckingham stage a performance of the Duke of Gloucester's legitimacy to the throne. Standing on a mechanical crane above the crowd (in place of a gallery as prescribed in Shakespeare's text), Richard addresses the English citizens and replies to Buckingham's plea to "do good" (III.vii.200) by blessing the land and withal from the "corruption of abusing times" (III.vi.197) with a megaphone. The use of the megaphone assumes performative and auditory meaning for the liveness of the voice and its materiality are now *mediated* and mechanised, reproduced and

[12] See Appendix 3.1 for the musical score of "The Show Must Go On."

[13] Phil Rose provides an intriguing musicological analysis of the song in relation to the story that the album and the film (*The Wall*) portray. See *Which One's Pink?* 123.

simulated through a sonic 'illusion' of amplified (vocal) presence. The de-construction and re-composition of the voice divorces and dislocates it from the acting body and the presence that is Richard, thereby emphasising the artifice and double performativity of his words. Expressing his anxieties about the peculiarity of the phonograph's ability to re-present the human voice, Adorno argues, in "The Curves of the Needle," that the phonograph, as an artefact of the technological, renders the human inhuman for there is an eradication of the human as nature / natural itself.[14] Barbara Engh, re-phrasing Adorno's fears, notes how Adorno was adamant about the silencing of the phonographic apparatus in the name of fidelity, for "the more faithful the reproduction, the muter the language of things" (127). While the phonograph works differently from the megaphone since the former is a removal of the voice from its speaking body, and replicates it in a different spatio-temporal context, the language of 'truthfulness' in Richard's oration becomes muted for the megaphone attempts to reproduce (and augment by several measures) the voice faithfully. It is immediate echo, reiteration and mechanical reproduction. Richard's mediated voice renders him 'inhuman' and dehumanises the words he proclaims. The sonic performance of the technologised word therefore contradicts, undermines and erodes the semantics of the utterance. The acoustic apparatus ironically amplifies truth by exposing Richard's claim, that he is "unfit for state and majesty" (III.vii.204), as untruth through its own mediated materiality. This is further adumbrated by the visual projection of Richard's image on the walls of the theatre, through a live video-capture. This analog replication underscores the technological simulation, where technology is able to distance as it creates reality via 'copy' and duplication. Such a double visual composition of Richard reifies the event (of kingly pronouncement) and the character-actor as simulated; a mediatisation of the ocular and the audial fashions a performative double of divided 'truth.'

These acoustic strategies consequently testify to how sound, as a performative line of action, can engender alternate meanings to other performance texts, and where a deep listening to the resonances in performance, and the acoustemologies of the performative moment, can reveal sonic meaning. However, of greater significance is the acoustic intercultural intersection of this scene. The interstice of cultural negotiation is heard in the juxtaposition, transition and slippages of vocal expressions and intonations. As Buckingham rallies the citizens to acknowledge the new reign of Richard (Disc 2, Chap 3 24:00), he conducts, quite literally, the crowd in a unified chant of 阿门 (*ah-mern*), "Amen," followed by 万岁 (*wan sui*), "Long live the King." The religious response of Hebrew origins ('Aman'), which indicatively means "to strengthen" or "confirm,"[15] is distinctly an expressive response that

[14] See "The Curves of the Needle," 49.

[15] See the Herbert Thurston, 'Amen' in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* for a more detailed description of the word's origin and contextual use.

characterises quintessentially Western faith (with the word ironically appropriated from a Middle Eastern culture). Though its vocal performance is in accordance with Shakespeare's text (III.vii.239), its juxtaposition with 万岁 (*wan sui*), here an inclusion by Lin, engenders a moment of intercultural performativity through vocalized sounds; it is not the semantics of the expressions that create a cultural conjunction but the utterance of both phrases on the stage which yields an auditory moment of 'blending' cultural expressions. 万岁 (*wan sui*, literally meaning 10,000 years of life) is exclaimed in the manner akin to how the Emperor was addressed in imperial China (and an oral tradition that has changed little across time). Juxtaposed, acoustically, with the Word as declaration of faith and declamation of being, the modulations of sonic frequencies and the inflections puncture histories and cultures, religions and traditions, as the acoustic densities of the rallying cries pierce through cultural differences in a single performative act. The breath mark between the two utterances is the interstitial site of the acoustic intercultural, where the voice transits from a Christian trace to that of an Oriental cry.

Intertextual Pop:
Articulation and (Cross) Connotation in Pop-Rock Music

Cultural relationships and cultural change are, as reiterated by Richard Middleton, not predetermined but instead a product of contradiction, negotiation, imposition, resistance, and transformation (8). Popular culture, and by extension popular music, attempts to "put a finger on that space, that terrain, of contradiction – between 'imposed' and 'authentic,' 'elite' and 'common,' predominant and subordinate, then and now, theirs and ours, and so on" (Middleton 7), since popular music is a by-product of class-cultural formations in communities. Pop (and Rock) music, as such, does not merely reflect these negotiations and struggles – economic, political, or cultural – but is also determined by such principles; musical forms are two-way mirrors that reify the images of class-cultural structures as much as these discourses appropriate them. In attempting to understand the dynamic nature of these processes, of how musical forms and practices are appropriated for socio-political use and at once reveal the socio-economic conditions of its production, Stuart Hall uses the term 'articulate' to formulate a 'principle of articulation' (Hall, "Notes on Deconstructing 'the Popular'" 235) where articulation examines the elements of culture that are determined by economic factors such as class position, and considers how the combination of existing elements and factors develop into new patterns or by attaching new connotations to them. Pop music replicates and exhibits these articulations of class structures and compositional hybrids of socially stratified communities

bound together by conditions of modernity and globalisation.[16] Strong articulative relationships are established when 'cross-connotation' takes place, that is, "when two or more different elements are made to connote, symbolise or evoke each other" (Middleton 9). Pop music is indubitably a cross-connotational product of cultural consumption that at once is engendered from this collage of musical traditions, genres, sounds and echoes, as it reifies and reflects these conditions intertextually. In *Richard III*, these articulative relationships are (audially) evident with Anglo-American pop-rock tunes interwoven with the distinctive intonations of 'musically' accented Mandarin to help create the soundscapes of an intercultural Shakespeare. This sonic 're-location' and (cultural) re-contextualisation engenders new cross-connotations and class-cultural contestations that mark an examination of an acoustic 'foreign-local,' 'West-East' divide.

In articulating the class-cultural densities of Pink Floyd's song, "The Show Must Go On," as archetype of their characteristic psychedelic progressive rock (also known as prog rock) sounds, exemplifies the spirit of experimentalism, cross-genre, acoustic mixing, and sonic transgression of late 1960s and 70s Western rock. As sub genre, prog rock represented more radical extremes for it was British music industry's attempt to elevate rock music to higher levels of artistic credibility. Prog rock revels in challenging technical and compositional boundaries by distorting song structures or introducing surrealistic subject matter. Most significantly, prog rock is sonic hybridity; the arrangements often included musical elements or sonic structures from classical music, jazz, and other existing genres past or present.[17] The pop-rock era of the 60s and 70s thus revealed the class-cultural clashes of social 'rebellion,' with demands for "greater 'freedom' and 'authenticity'," (Middleton 15) which articulated a framework of a dominant musical ideology mediated by a discourse organised around notions of 'youth,' 'modernity' and 'pleasure' (ibid.). Performing, listening and appreciating prog rock became a socio-political statement of reaction and rebellion against the established discourses.

Pink Floyd's music, in particular the 'cutting-edge' album *The Wall*, in which "The Show Must Go On" is found, is prog rock composed of cross-connotations and intertexts. Recognised as being among the foremost experimental English bands of the 70s, Pink Floyd's songs are often articulative of the socio-cultural conditions of late modernity. While this experimental and transgressive spirit parallels Lin's own 'avant-gardism,' hybrid styles and 'progressive'

[16] Middleton provides, very briefly, the example of how rhythmic techniques derived from working-class black American music were combined with other elements in 1920s dance music to signify a kind of safe but exotic, hedonist escapism for a broad grouping of classes in Britain. See Middleton 8-9.

[17] See progarchives.com for an overview of definitions and developments of this subgenre <http://www.progarchives.com/Progressive-rock.asp#definition>.

attitudes, and could possibly account for the rock song's 'foreign' presence in a 'local' Chinese production, the relationship songs have with their societies in which they exist

> is not 'natural' but contrived; it is the product of cultural work. Particularly in complex, internally differentiated societies, musical styles are assemblages of elements from a variety of sources, each with a variety of histories and connotations, and these assemblages can, in appropriate circumstances, be prised open and the elements rearticulated in different contexts (Middleton 16)

"The Show Must Go On" is distinctly an 'assemblage' and 'collage' of intertexts, where the vocal patterning resembles that of the Beach Boys and the title (as well as the harmonising voices) a replication of Queen's signature tune of the same name (with Queen being yet another eminent innovative and revolutionary British rock band of the same era). Lin's use of this signature song marks the soundscape with intertextual harmonics where, similar to the harmonic overtones in music, acoustic meaning reverberates with infinite sequences of cross-connotations and referentiality. It is in these overtones that the acoustic intercultural can be heard as well for it is here that the 'foreign' elements are first located as hybrid as they ebb and flow into the local tongue.

Re-articulated in a different context, the density of this song's meaning is further adumbrated by broader contexts of which the song is a track in Pink Floyd's landmark album which had, subsequently, an accompanying musical film (1982) that featured the protagonist Pink's surrealistic descent into drugs and despair, and subsequent ascent as an oppressive dictator in a fascist Orwellian world.[18] The music album itself is also a narrative that traces the existential struggles and pathology of protagonist Pink. While loosely autobiographical of the band's former member Syd Barrett, the film was largely inspired by Jean-Paul Sartre's story *The Wall* and band leader Roger Waters' own experience as a rock musician.[19] Thus, itself a product of referentiality, intertextuality and cross-connotation, the political sub-texts of the film and the album undoubtedly rearticulate and reify the politics of cultural practice in *Richard III* for it advances not merely a political reading of the performance, already suggested in Richard's physical resemblance to Mao, but also engender associations of cultural imperialism in intercultural practices of Western dramaturgs and directors. Viewed through this lens of infinite cross-connotation, Lin's 'pop' performance strategy can be regarded as

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[18] See "The Show Must Go On (Pink Floyd: The Wall)" on *Youtube* <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FphuBPNYcWo>. See also Bret Urick's online analysis, *Pink Floyd: The Wall. A Complete Analysis* on <http://www.thewallanalysis.com/Intro.html> for an explanation of the narrative the runs through the album.

[19] See an interesting Freudian psychoanalytic analysis and an examination of the origins of the album "The Wall" in Phil Rose's *Which One's Pink*, 80-134.

counter-appropriations to the modes of Western acoustic intercultural practice. As Martin Hatch shows of how Anglo-American pop music can become acculturated with indigenous folk tunes and traditional sounds to produce a unique Indonesian pop genre, Lin's use of pop-rock tunes exemplifies the ways in which 'foreign' sounds need not be regarded as a threat but a store of musical ideas and techniques that can be used for local ends.[20]

The intercultural as intertextual, heard in Lin's pop acoustic strategy, is also evidenced in the recurrence of the 1968 classic song "The Windmills of Your Mind" (*Les moulins de mon cœur*). The death of Clarence and King Edward IV (which Lin does not dramatise but has Edward's death announced in, yet again, the style of an imperial announcement) has just occurred shortly before and in Act II Sc ii, the plot Richard sets in motion slowly unfolds. Richard has the young son and daughter convinced that it is Edward and the Queen who are responsible for the death of their father. As Queen Elizabeth enters, all present, including the Duchess of York – the mother of Edward, Richard and Clarence – learn of the death of Edward. There is a moment of communal grief as each woman mourns for her respective loss. The decision of crowning the next King however is imperative on Earl Rivers', brother of Elizabeth, mind and he suggests that the Prince of Wales should be brought back from Ludlow to be crowned King. Gloucester and his train enter, and Buckingham convinces Rivers that a larger team of aide might prove better security for the Prince. The scene ends with Richard abiding by Buckingham's decisions to "part the Queen's proud kindred from the King" (II.ii.149). As stage lights fade to black a video slideshow of various Chinese Winter and Summer Palaces is projected with Michel Legrand's composition performed by the mesmerising contralto voice of Alison Moyet (Chap 5 00:46:50).[21]

The song is heard again after IV.ii (Disc 2, 00:34:15) as a musical bridge to the scenes. As actors lay the props for the following scene, which involves a carousel-like structure, video images of lotus flower leaves on a pond juxtaposed with close-ups of snow-filled ground densely populated by twigs are projected. As the song plays, Richard emerges from stage left to spin the carousel gently. While the revolutions mesmerise, the women of Richard's political machination – Queen Margaret, Queen Elizabeth, Lady Anne and the Duchess of York – emerge to take their seat around the carousel. Green lights flood the stage in an attempt to create an atmosphere of sinisterism and psychedelia inspired, perhaps, by the circular traverse suggested in the song lyrics. As "Windmill" fades, Richard enters with a soliloquy about his

[20] See Martin Hatch, 'Popular Music in West Africa' in *World Music, Politics, and Social Change*, ed. Simon Frith. 47-68.

[21] See <http://www.gyrosquartet.com/Scores/Windmills_Score.htm> for a complete version of the song as score. See alternatively Appendix 3.2 for the score, and Appendix 3.3 for the complete lyrics.

desire to marry his brother's wife Anne "Or else [his] kingdom stands on brittle glass" (IV.ii.64) while the women, lamenting their loss, curse Richard.

The staging of this scene is however not a chronological progression from the previous (IV.ii) but is instead a collage of fragments from IV.i, IV.ii and IV.iv with significant lines extracted and juxtaposed. "Windmills" becomes the 'overarching' narrative that binds these de-chronologised (and re-contextualised) lines particularly since the song reflects a strong surrealism and imaginative quality of an eternal circularism, with the windmills in one's mind spiralling ceaselessly.

Round, like a circle in a spiral
Like a wheel within a wheel.
Never ending or beginning,
On an ever spinning wheel
Like a snowball down a mountain
Or a carnival balloon
Like a carousel that's turning
Running rings around the moon

Like a clock whose hands are sweeping
Past the minutes on its face
And the world is like an apple
Whirling silently in space
Like the circles that you find
In the windmills of your mind

The surrealistic scene of juxtaposed voices and soliloquies that have now come together bounded by the motif of the carousel / windmill accentuates the quality of fatal finality that spirals deeper as it consumes all in the play – it is a cycle of vengeance and death. As Richard, who in the dramatic text reveals to Catesby "tear-falling pity dwells not in [his] eye" (IV.ii.68) but here recites it either as address to the women on the carousel or as soliloquy, the song increases in gain and assumes dramatic prominence as the characters keep silent, spinning slowly around the carousel with Richard seated at the centre determining the velocity of its gyration. While Moyet sings the third to fifth verses, two victims contorting in pain are wheeled onto the stage. The surreal phantasmagoric pastiche ends and IV. iv begins as the two characters, slumped lifeless on the wheel-chair, are wheeled off.

"Windmills" serves, distinctly, a dramatic function as an alter-narrative that is meta-commentary to the dramatic action as much it is at once part of the dramatic composition and

the mise en scène. The lyrics are composed of metaphors of circularity, entropy, beginnings and endings bound by eternal recurrence. It reflects the spiraling inevitability of a cycle of vengeance and death that Richard causes which in turn would return to claim his reputation and his life. The structure of the song performs, as music, this cyclicity as well where, unlike modern pop songs, there is no distinctive 'verse-chorus' binary pattern. Instead, the melody repeats itself with every two stanzas, akin to a strophic form, and with it the harmonic patterns and melodic line. The spiraling experience is engendered by the notational progression that is not merely identical with every stanza but within stanzas as well. Evidently, the rhythmic pattern of each line is identical with quavers granted for each syllable / word and this steady rhythm engenders a constancy of an eternal progress of which the melody creates that circularity with the beginning note of each line sequence, and with it the melodic progression, ascending (lines 1-6 of the two stanza structure) and then descending (final 8 lines of the two stanza structure). The notational intervals of every line are also interestingly identical, adding yet again to this structure of an unwavering circularity that marks sonically a moment of the eternal return.[22]

The graphemic representation as score – the fundamental units of musical notation – and the song as music, can be said to perform this eternal recurrence of not only Richard's treachery that gyrates of greed, power and desire which then consumes him and all that are caught in the whirligig, but also about the recurring history of victims and victimisation. Its use in a Chinese adaptation of Shakespeare suggests perhaps universal human conditions that transcend culture or colour. Lin was attracted to *Richard III* because of the protagonist's cruelty that has been observed many times in Chinese history, but also of how "those who lack vigilance against schemes are the conspirator's accomplices, though they can also find themselves among the victims" (*Internet Shakespeare* para 9). For Lin, one of the eternal returns of the human (political) condition is the apathy of individuals who inevitability become the victims of their own indifference.

While the song interwoven cleverly as dramatic motif contributes to thematic propagation, "Windmills" as Anglo-American pop should and must be considered as inter-cultural artifact generating questions of cultural politics as "The Show Must Go On" has. The analysis of popular music differs significantly from that of ethnomusicological studies where cultural tunes are assumed to belong to a stable, monolithic 'culture' whose characteristics can

[22] The concept of the eternal return or eternal recurrence is a belief shared, strangely, by pre-modern societies from the Egyptians to the Greeks and Indians. It postulates that the universe has no particular beginning or end and that it has been recurring and self-generating, and will continue to do so in a self-similar form for an infinite number of times. Perhaps the most prominent use of it in modern philosophy is by Friedrich Nietzsche who in *The Gay Science* and *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* wrote of this eternal recurrence of meaningless chaos and shuffling of matter and law that creates universes whose evolution would yield meaningless human existence.

be mapped on to or derived from a musical structure or a set of musical characteristics; it is music accepted, acknowledged and 'owned' by a particular society (Brackett 22). Popular music, particularly Western pop, however functions differently often due to its transcultural and transnational qualities. It eludes cultural authority and its existence is based very much on its reception that is subjected to various positions of class, gender, and cultural differences. There is, as such, a broad range of factors that influence the listening process and the analysis of popular music for there can be "multiple listening positions [...] available to a single listener; this suggests the existence of a kind of double- (or multiple-) 'eared' listener" (Brackett 23).

Such subjectivities in considering popular music would indicate therefore a need to move beyond a musicological analysis and consider the intertextual nature of popular music – of how pop songs (re)cite, repeat, refer, and reiterate sonic signatures, musical phrases, lyrics, rhythms, style, and concerns. As Brackett observes

> meaning is more likely to result from a song's similarity to and difference from other songs within the total musical field, from the codes it activates and from the subject positions and competences it makes available to listeners that permits them to identify with those codes (23).

Like "The Show Must Go On," whose multiple meanings are engendered from the competing codes of similarity and difference to other songs, "Windmills" likewise is cultural musical icon whose codes of replication and reproduction have rendered it one of the most iconic signifiers of American pop culture. When employed in *Richard III*, the song undoubtedly refers, 'biographically,' to the 1968 film *The Thomas Crown Affair* of which the tune won the Best Original Song title at the 1969 Academy Awards. Heard when Steve McQueen flies his glider while planning for the bank heist, the cultural associations of Western liberal democratic capitalist ideologies can be conceived by an audience who is able to recall this poignant performative moment in the film.[23] More significantly, its 'iconic' status of American 60s pop is evident from the multiple reproductions and instrumental adaptations by numerous singers and musicians from Alison Moyet to Sting, Henry Mancini to Elaine Paige.[24] The song has also crossed genres and geographies with artists such as Israeli singer Rona Kenan recording it on her second album *Through Foreign Eyes*. Dusty Springfield's version reached number 31 on the U.S. *Billboard* Hot 100 chart and number 3 on the *Billboard* Adult Contemporary Chart in 1969 (Whitburn 592). Its history of duplication and replication over the last forty years testifies to

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[23] See *Youtube*, "Thomas Crown (1968) The Windmills of Your Mind" for a video of this scene. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dAGGTVft5Lk>.

[24] A search of *Amazon.com* reveals 221 different recordings of the song, as mp3 format, by various artistes. Search <http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_sb_noss?url=search-alias%3Ddigital-music&field-keywords=Windmills+of+your+mind&x=0&y=0>.

"Windmill's" mythical status and accords it as one of the most successful Western pop classics. Its intertextual associations inevitably implicate the song's performance as intercultural in *Richard III*. Faithful to Lin's 'pop' aesthetic strategy, "Windmill" becomes the medium of the intercultural, negotiating Western and Eastern polarities by its inherent intertextual quality that transcends cultural boundaries. At the same time, Western (specifically American) attitudes and aspects are evoked in the song's cross-connotative quality. Used in the performance, the song pushes the reformist and progressive attitudes of a new and modern Chinese theatre under Lin's direction via these cultural associations.

The employment of 'pop' sounds does not end with "Windmills" and "The Show Must Go On." Lin uses heavily jazz compositions and big band sounds to underscore the modern qualities of the production as he plays with (inter)culturalism through sound. The performance opens to a big band tune sounded at deafening volumes while characters randomly march across the stage before Richard delivers his infamous soliloquy, "Now is the winter of our discontent [...]" (I.i.1). At other times, these compositions are played as transitions during scene changes. Their 'upbeat' quality, and associations with the Swing era of the 1930s, underscores ironically the tragic qualities of the play while introducing a 'foreign' element into a Chinese Shakespearean adaptation. Samuel Barber's "Adagio for Strings" (or second movement in the String Quartet, Op. 11), composed in 1936, played in the final scene that witnesses Richard's decline and demise, serves a similar intercultural purpose in accordance with a 'pop strategy' that has been achieved consistently since this composition is perhaps the most popular pieces for a string orchestra, and has been employed in many films and television programmes.[25]

Lin's acoustic strategy in *Richard III* can then be said to merge two modes of musical (re)production: a sonic 'deterritorialisation' and a melodic popularisation. In soundscape studies or acoustic ecology, sound delineates space culturally or environmentally. An extraction and reproduction of sound in a different environment creates an instance of sonic deterritorialisation, as Jean-Paul Thibaud notes. The sonorous has the ability to disrupt, transgress and dissolve territorial structures where a negation of sonic identity of places occurs. While Thibaud was referring specifically to the use of headphones in creating a 'sonic bridge' between domestic and public spaces resulting in a 'phonic deterritorialisation' of the urban environment where the music from the headphones become a link that neutralises the sonic identity of places creating a spatial decontextualisation with this bridge between the

[25] See "An Adagio for Strings, and for the Ages" by Johanna Keller, in the *New York Times*, for an overview of the work's popularity in pop culture <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/07/arts/music/07barber.html?ref=arts>.

interior and exterior, applied to the acoustics of interculturalism[26] one could consider how deterritorialisation works to decontextualise the cultural spaces from which this music is associated. The use of actual recordings of these pop songs produces the effect of deterritorialising not merely an Anglo-American culture reflected in the pop tunes, or of a Shakespearean 'culture' (if one may loosely claim an existence) but of Chinese culture as well for it fractures these distinctions in the space of performance and relocates 'Chineseness' as a local-global. This view is further affirmed when the music Lin uses is considered in a relation to a historicist framework. Anglo-American pop music is the music of industrial capitalism; it marks the decline of 'folk' and 'traditional' sounds, and heralds a popular culture developed against a backdrop of developing world markets and a global economy.[27] Lin's acoustic intercultural strategy of (counter) appropriating Anglo-American pop works rides on these socio-economic currents by having Chinese theatre hold a mirror up to contemporary China's status as the world's most rapidly advancing economy that is to redefine herself and reconceptualise a Western global modernity. Speaking of the rock music genre, whose ideas can certainly be translated to pop music, Foucault notes that rock

> offers the possibility of a relation which is intense, strong, alive, 'dramatic' (in that rock presents itself as a spectacle, that listening to it is an event and that it produces itself on stage), with a music that is itself impoverished, but through which the listener affirms himself ("Contemporary Music" 7).

This 'self-affirmation' is certainly distinct in *Richard III*. The ear by which Lin listens to modern China is a borrowed ear; it is an acoustics of counter-appropriation where the East now listens (in)to the West to compose an acoustemology of the self.

'Echo-Loca(lisa)tion': Sonic Adaptation & Transformation in a Kabuki *Twelfth Night*

In a conversation about Chinese traditional theatre doing Shakespeare, and the necessary negotiations between both when East meets West, Hu Weimin and Ye Changhai comment about the need to "step out but stay close to home" (190). By this Hu and Ye believe that the elements of both traditional Chinese forms and Shakespearean humanism need to be selectively considered for an optimal state of creativity,

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[26] See Thibaud, "The Sonic Composition of the City" 333-4.

[27] In attempting to delineate the problems and possibilities of the study of popular music, Richard Middleton provides a concise historicist overview its development in *Studying Popular Music*, 11-16.

> when we are immersed in an artistic fusion, open and flexible, being oneself and more. In other words, everything is done to serve the creation of characters; every specific method, convention, or technique exists for this expressed purpose alone, not for showcasing individual virtuosity (191).

Hu and Ye believe, as such, that there can be harmony through conflict despite the distinct differences between Chinese traditional theatre and Shakespeare. Where Lin is concerned, tradition – be it form or philosophy – remains secondary to the social concerns of the performance. As exemplified in not merely the mise en scène but the soundscapes of 理查三世 (*Richard III*), a progressive pop aesthetic seems the appropriate attitude to adopt in a newly globalised inter-cultural China.

Yukio Ninagawa's Kabuki *Twelfth Night* (*NINAGAWA* 十二夜), on the other hand, seems to illustrate Hu and Ye's belief in a possible 'artistic fusion' of East-West traditions, that at once retains the modern, progressive attitudes Lin possesses despite attempting Shakespeare as traditional Kabuki. First performed at the Kabukiza in Ginza, one of Japan's best-known Kabuki theaters, in July 2005, the production later travelled to London, and was staged at the Barbican, in March 2009.[28] In collaboration with the Shochiku Grand Kabuki, one of the oldest Kabuki companies in Japan, and featuring renowned Kabuki actors of the Kikunosuke family in the leading roles, Ninagawa's *Twelfth Night* remains one of the internationally acclaimed director's most significant attempts at an artistic fusion of two classical traditions located at cultural polarities.[29] While retaining the essential performance principles and the traditional methods of Kabuki, Ninagawa, who is more renowned for his intrepid experimentalism and hybrid forms that 'blend' the contemporary and traditional, as well as scenographically astounding adaptations of Shakespearean plays and Greek tragedies, there were elements of the modern introduced to "create a special effect" and "broker a happy marriage between Kabuki and William Shakespeare" (London Programme Notes 8). Comparable to Lin's dramaturgically progressive attitudes, Ninagawa's productions often testify to how, in the global theatre, there should be a "good degree of transformation in what people call the proper continuation of tradition" (Ninagawa qtd in Hasebe 3).

Possibly "the most successful living exponent of theatrical cross-fertilisation" (Wardle 1994) and a director who is able to "forge a Euro-Japanese scenic vocabulary" (ibid.), Ninagawa's virtuosity as one of the foremost Asian directors able to 'localise' Western dramatic

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[28] The production referred to in this chapter is a recording of a 2007 performance staged at the Kabukiza. I will, however, supplement the analysis with my own experience of seeing the play at London's Barbican on 25 March 2009.

[29] See *Shochiku Grand Kabuki Twelfth Night* <http://www.kabuki-bito.jp/juniya/en/> for a movie trailer of this production.

texts and "reject [...] preconceived ideas of Shakespeare" (Suematsu 16) with radical transformations through a new (largely visual) aesthetic that combines East with West precedes him.[30] Intercultural explorations of sound and music are not new to Ninagawa since he recognizes that no single performance strategy can effectively capture the 'essence' of Shakespeare's plays. In a documented interview, Ninagawa expresses the rationale for the performance strategies adopted in producing Shakespeare in Japan. Referring specifically to the 1989 production of *The Tempest* (テンペスト), Ninagawa recognises that no one tactic could be used to direct Shakespeare and even the music, such as the sound of the Japanese drums, was insufficient in depicting the world of *The Tempest*. Attempts to relocate Shakespeare, as 'Japanese,' made the production 'exotic,' 'foreign,' and removed since the "surface things cannot evoke the depth and vastness of the world of Shakespeare" (Yasunari in Ryuta et. al. 214). The introduction of 'foreign' sounds and tunes bridge that interculturality in the desire to abandon a purely Japanese style. In the 1974 production of *Romeo and Juliet* (ロミオとジュリエット), Ninagawa opened the performance with music from Elton John. For him, popularizing the production was foremost as a performative strategy, and music was the means to achieve this intercultural 'popularisation.' His works have consequently attempted a 'hybridised' localisation through the use of sound. In what was a landmark production, *Ninagawa Macbeth* (*NINAGAWA* マクベス), first performed in 1980 and re-made twenty-one years later, saw an overarching Shinto philosophy that framed the contesting East-West elements. A huge *butsudan* (佛壇) or a home altar, which enshrines the spirits of ancestors as ancestral tablets (位牌, *iɦai*), formed the stage and became the world of *Macbeth* in 16th century Japan. What was heard emerging from the *butsudan* were Buddhist chants or *shōmyō* (声明). Through an eclectic interplay of music's 'fluid' nature, Ninagawa blended the end of these chants with the beginnings of a Western classical piece. While the sliding doors of the altar opened and the chants faded, Faure's *Requiem* played. In the final scene, as Macbeth dies at the hands of Macduff, Barber's "Adagio for Strings" interjected with a foreignness that has now become 'localised' through music's emotive and atmospheric qualities.

The opening scene of *Twelfth Night* [Disc 1 Chap 1 00:02:43] introduces Ninagawa's trademark theatricality and an interculturalism that finds a language both visual and acoustic. As the traditional set curtain is drawn, the audience is faced with a full wall of mirrors across

[30] The success of this 'combination' and/or fusion certainly varies with each production and critics of Ninagawa have censured his 'Japanising' tactics – of essentialising Japanese performance traditions of Kabuki and Noh, for example, to cater to an international market. In so doing, he has been accused of being 'disloyal' to the performance traditions and 'bastardising' such time-honoured practices. Tetsuo Kishi criticises Ninagawa's productions of *The Tempest* and *Macbeth* for extracting elements of Noh and Kabuki without their contexts or with fidelity to the traditions. See "Japanese Shakespeare and English Reviewers" in *Shakespeare and the Japanese Stage*, 110-123.

the back of the stage suggesting, on many levels, the doubled-ness, duplicity and twinning that is the recurring theme in *Twelfth Night*. The audience is forced to confront itself and the illusion that is the theatrical style of Ninagawa. In many ways, the mirror motif accentuates the fictive quality of *Twelfth Night* and adumbrates the stylized illusion that is the performative aesthetic of Kabuki (as opposed to Western realism). For Ninagawa, the use of the mirror is "a natural element" (Ninagawa in Hasebe 4) and shows the actors and the stage mechanisms at the same time. As a staging effect, it adds depth and creates a kaleidoscope effect that yields a multiplicity of perspectives from the audience seated at different locations in the auditorium (ibid.). While clearly a visual aesthetic, the mise en scène introduces the 'interweaving' of styles that is to be the intercultural soundscape that opens the play. In theatrical discourse, 'interweaving' could be explained as a recognition of the

> irreducible diversity of connections, which bring into relatedness not essentialist identities, but further hybrid forms [...]It is also a matter of the circulation of threads, in such a manner that they constantly flow and that they relate precisely through its movement" (Zea, Para 1).

Ninagawa's brand of interculturalism interweaves 'foreign' elements into what is a predominantly 'local' aesthetic not by a violent extraction or transformation of forms but by a location of performative trajectories that permit a measured integration of 'Otherness.'

As the audience is awed by the spectacle of mirrors and cherry trees in full bloom lined across the stage, the tune of "O Come, O Come Emmanuel" sung by a choir of three boy sopranos, dressed in Renaissance ruff collars with centre-parted hair, standing centre-stage, is heard. A harpsichord is played live on stage and three Kabuki musicians that form a *hayashi* (囃子) – an ensemble of musicians who provide musical accompaniment and also form part of the *geza*[31] – establish a rhythm for the pre-pubescent singers. Two play the *kō-tsuzumi* (小鼓, an hour-glass shaped drum played on the shoulder) and the other sounds the *ō-tsuzumi* (大鼓, a similar hour-glass drum, slightly larger than the *kō-tsuzumi*, played on the hip).[32] The harpsichord plays to a sluggish tempo (*largo*) that is both melancholic and poignant, while the boy choir

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[31] *Geza* or *geza-ongaku*, which means accompaniment, is the off-stage music played from a room called the *kuromisu*, or 'black curtain.' In the setup of a Kabuki stage, the *kuromisu* is usually found in a room stage-left. This is where the musicians produce the 'accompanying' music, sound effects and noise for the performance. See William Malm, *Japanese Music and Musical Instruments* 221-228 for a description of *geza-ongaku* and the instruments involved.

[32] The two *tsuzumi* drums are also collectively known as the *daishō* (大小).

accompanies with vocals, giving cause for Orsino to incant the opening lines of the play which elevates music and emotion as parallel mirrors of expression:

> If music be the food of love, play on,
> Give me excess of it, that, surfeiting,
> The appetite may sicken, and so die.
> That strain again, it had a dying fall [...] (I.i.1-4)

The acoustic interplay is not merely the incorporation of a song Western in origin and religious in connotation into a distinctively Japanese performance tradition but also the addition of the cembalo / harpsichord played by Japanese musician Kasamatsu Yasuhiro, who is dressed in the robes of Kabuki *hayashikata* (囃子方, instrumentalists). The performance thus mimics, while transposing culturally, a *nagauta* (長唄) recital of Kabuki Music. *Nagauta* literally means 'long song' and is a song accompanied often only by the *shamisen* (三味線) and *tsuzumi* drums (at times the nokan [能管, noh flute] is included) and played to Kabuki classical dances (*buyō*, 舞踊).[33] Here, the harpsichord takes the place of the *shamisen* and the boy sopranos the *gidayu* (竹本義太夫) – the style of chanting and chanter of narrative songs in Japanese Noh, Bunraku and Kabuki. The dramaturgical motivation for this overture seems to be unclear, though there is dramatic purpose as a device to introduce the lovesickness Orsino suffers from at the beginning of the play. It is also consonant with Ninagawa's progressive, avant-garde attitudes in which he did not want, in this production, to be completely loyal to the conventions of Kabuki and wanted to bring in about "10% or 20% new and different elements" (Ninagawa in Hasebe 3). For Ninagawa, the most effective way of interweaving this 10% to 20% of the 'foreign' is via a re-composition of the soundscape and a retuning of an audience's ear to that of listening to the self through the other. In this overture which blends seamlessly into I.i, the act of acoustic counter-appropriation is the employment of a distinctively Western advent song / Christmas hymn, its 'subjugation,' adaptation, and transformation through the imposition of a Japanese musical form and structure.

Sonic Defamiliarisation:
Rhythmic Interjections & Audial Foreignness

"O Come, O Come Emmanuel" is a translation of the Catholic Latin text entitled "Veni, veni, Emmanuel" by John Mason Neale written in the mid-19th century though the melody itself dates back to the 12th Century with some postulating it to have originated from 8th century

[33] See Malm, *Traditional Japanese Music* 23-7, for more on *Nagauta*.

Gregorian chants. The lyrics however are based on the biblical prophecy from Isaiah 7:14 in which God grants Israel a sign that will be called 'Immanuel' or 'God with us.'[34] The cultural religious history, as the basis of an intercultural acoustemology, is significant for the text is, strangely, performed in the original Latin and appropriated to introduce, aurally, a Kabuki production of a script from the foremost English playwright in history. Its use signifies an attempt at interweaving foreignness into a local tradition, and a localization of that foreign tune through a musical translation that retains the dominant melody and language of origin. By having it performed in Latin, what is certainly now a dead tongue, the aural alienation becomes compounded and a third 'culture' is introduced to complicate the intercultural negotiations performed as a recital event. Orsino's interjection in between the sopranos' performance punctures the sonic moment with yet another tongue – *Nihongo* (日本語, Japanese language). Language, according to Barbara Thornbury, is the principal marker of foreignness in Japanese theatre abroad (251). Yet the markers of foreignness are the languages spoken and sung, interjectively at this moment, and the performative language of a hybrid Christmas carol. However, employed in this Kabuki performance, the foreignness of the text is here subdued as musical translation; its 'alien' quality is made to assimilate via an assumed universality of sound (and familiarity of the tune). In this process, the act of appropriation is made 'invisible' and the intercultural is performed as an acoustical transformation. Its alien quality is also made less strident with its seemingly apt dramatic function. That said, this dense web of cultural negotiations and interplay engender alternative receptions when the production is presented to a London audience at the Barbican whose appreciation of this performative moment is rendered doubly-exotic since what an English audience might hear is a familiar hymn defamiliarised, and whose familiarity as 'local' and 'own' is made strange and 'other,' transformed musically by a foreign performance language.[35]

The acoustic technique of an auditory defamiliarisation occurs not only in the lyrical translation but also in the performance of the song as music. This strange hybrid that is now a Western Christmas hymn made *à la japonaise* is further 'localised' and assimilated by the accompanying performance of the *tsuzumi* drums whose structural rhythms and patterns differ discordantly from the 4/4 tempo of the Western advent hymn whose metrical stability is established by the performing harpsichord. In the performance of the *tsuzumi* drums, there are five basic sounds named onomatopoetically – *pon*, *pu*, *ta*, *chi*, and *tsu*. These sounds indicate

[34] See Appendix 3.4 for the musical score of "O Come, O Come Emmanuel."

[35] Admittedly, not all of the audience was English and there were a significant number of Japanese tourists who had travelled to the Barbican to see the 2009 performance. Nevertheless, the cultural politics of performing this song translated, in an English performance space to a predominantly English audience, cannot be ignored.

different beat markers. While the music of these drums, along with the *taikō* (太鼓, 'great' drum), consist of a series of stereotyped patterns arranged in a prescribed order with the patterns of the *ō-tsuzumi* and *kō-tsuzumi* being most intimately connected (as heard in this overture), they do not always play the same pattern at the same time and the rhythms performed in Kabuki (or Noh, since these instruments were originally accompaniment in Noh performances) are much 'looser' and less regulative.[36] The metrical time for "O Come, O Come Emmanuel" follows a regular 4/4 metre, with an expected drumming on the downbeats (1 and 3) if any, as prescribed in the score though the actual performance of the tempo accommodates some variation and drawn pauses. Heard as music, the interjection of *tsuzumi* drums beating to a different rhythmic scheme (as opposed to the down-beats common in Western music), manifested as the various onomatopoeic sound patterns, puncture the forward cyclical structure of the hymn and its rhythmic predictability at seemingly random beat sections as it serves as an acoustic reminder of the strangeness that is this musical hybrid.

A surface listening would yield an interpretation of the song as emotional affect and a dramatic device the effectively introduces Orsino's melancholy. While songs have often been circulated and reproduced in varying contexts, the 'trace' of their origin is always already re-presented in the new. For "O Come, O Come Emmanuel," the residue of its cultural and religious history are interwoven into its revision but never erased. Like Lin's strategy of sonic 'deterritorialisation' of pop tunes, Ninagawa's re-creation and re-production of this Christian hymn decontextualises and revises its meaning; it is secularised, stripped of its transcendental signification through a performative (re)use as it is inserted into a framework of a Japanese performance culture whose principles are founded on Shinto beliefs. In an intercultural performance where Kabuki engages with Shakespeare, these cultural transformations and tensions become necessarily salient and politically volatile particularly when performed for an English audience in London. Considered within the narrative framework, this act of acoustic interculturalism seems performatively inventive and apposite. As Mae Smethurst describes of Ninagawa's *Medea*, Ninagawa seems to possess a directorial talent for "bridg[ing] the gap between West and East, on the one hand, by appealing to Western audiences with his Japanese productions and, on the other, by bridging a Western play to Japanese and other audiences" (2). Yet a deep listening to this performance within a performance enables one to hear the moments of discomforting disjunctures and fissures of intercultural cohesion amplified by *pon*, *pu*, *ta*, *chi*, and *tsu* of the drums. The rhythms remind one periodically that this musical integration of an advent hymn can be regarded as an act of reversed imperialism, an acoustic

[36] For a detailed study of the organisation of the music, see William Malm, "The Rhythmic Orientation of Two Drums in the Japanese No Drama," *Ethnomusicology* 2.3 (1958): 89-95.

counter-appropriation that subjects a Western popular tune to an Eastern, specifically Japanese, aesthetics. These intercultural tensions inevitably become amplified with the production's tour at the Barbican in 2009.

These tonal residues of 'foreign' timbres remain consistent in the performance with the harp distinctly heard in various scenes such as the meeting between Viola / Cesario and Olivia, in the final act of the performance (what is a merger of Acts 4 and 5 in Shakespeare's text) [Disc Two Chap 15 1:17:00]. The distinct timbres of the harp are also heard enwrapping Olivia's love-stricken soliloquy at the end of I.v when she expresses her infatuation for Viola / Cesario (equivalent of I.v.311-315) [Disc One Chap 14 1:06.39] as well as in III.I (Disc Two Chap 5 25:43) where the romantic tensions break with Olivia's explicit declaration of love for Viola / Cesario. In all of these scenes, the tone colour of the harp, often described as warm, rounded and 'smooth' due to the possibility of it creating a near perfect sine wave, serve not only as a secondary sign text with its (Western) romantic associations but become a leitmotiv for the (mis)affections between Olivia and the doubled Viola. The use of specific tonal and acoustic signatures as leitmotiv is a distinct practice in Kabuki. *Geza* music, or *geza-ongaku* which is the off-stage music, including various sound effects, produced by musicians behind the slates of a window in the downstage-right scenery flat of a Kabuki stage, and its appreciation depends on previous knowledge of the music and patterns used. The use of prescribed familiar patterns and musical processes used in a Kabuki performance excavates associations through such a performative leitmotiv. For example, when the ō-*daiko* (太鼓, which is a large drum played upright) plays the sound of the ocean, the *shamisen* (三味線 , a three-stringed instrument resembling a banjo) joins in on the piece "*Chidori*," as the *chidori* is a bird (a sandpiper) commonly found along the shores of Japan (Malm, *Japanese Music Instruments* 224). Hence, "the knowledge of many other effects [...] is a true contribution to one's response to the entire production" (ibid.). The harp's timbre, as leitmotiv, excavates however interesting issues of sound as a means of negotiating cultural diversity since sound can be political.

While the stylised movements that characterise Kabuki acting are still largely observed such as the sequences of *kata* (型, or movement) (in this production it is of the more gracious and sensual *wagoto* style [和事]) which move from one statuesque position to the next, interspersed with pauses (休止, *ma*) until the climactic sequence freezes in the infamous expressive pose called *mie* (見え), and the behavioural gestures and bodily distance between male and female characters kept, the timbres of the harp vibrate with a love theme that interjects with Western concepts of romantic attraction and 'love-at-first-sight.' The harp, inadvertently, is culturally associated particularly with Celtic identity (cláirseach) and remains one of the characteristic instruments of Western classical music especially in the Baroque

period, though recognisably the origins of the instrument extend to various parts of ancient Assyria, Mesopotamia and Egypt. Etymologically, 'harp' is derived from Anglo-Saxon, Old German, and Old Norse words that indicate 'to pluck.' Its associations with Western classical sounds are too indubitable with its extensive use in Roman occupied Europe and consequently medieval Western Europe. Furthermore, the bible often describes King David to play a simple bow harp, thereby distinctly associating Western Christendom with this instrument (1 Samuel 16:33).[37] The intercultural in these moments are then, curiously, located in the inter-juncture between the visual and acoustic texts, the space between sight and sound, through the ways in which both (re)present cultural definitions of love and its expression.

If *NINAGAWA* 十二夜 (*Twelfth Night*) is to be considered as 'effective' intercultural hybrid of the East with West, to both West and East, it would be the ways in which Ninagawa does not attempt to decontextualise or fragment performance traditions but rather uses them as 'frames.' Akhihiko Senda notes that the success of Ninagawa's interculturalism is attributed to how he furnishes Shakespeare's plays with Japanese frameworks, "yet he never makes any alterations in the playscripts; he does not change names of characters or places" (22). In *NINAGAWA* 十二夜 (*Twelfth Night*), the principles and philosophies of Kabuki are kept faithful (though compromises on the speed of the movement and the narrative are made) and Shakespeare retains 'authenticity' with the performance based closely on a Japanese translation by Yushi Odashima. The intercultural strategy in this production is arguably a manipulation of acoustic tendencies and musical forms but even then, the vocal and musical conventions of Kabuki are thoroughly exploited in this adaptive appropriation of Shakespeare. The vocal chants of the *gidayu* are heard, for example, in the scene transition between Scene 1 (equivalent of I.i in Shakespeare's text) and Scene 2 – the raging tempest and resultant sinking of Sebastian and Viola's ship (an artistic addition by Ninagawa). The *shamisen* still retains its importance as the primary instrument of Kabuki music, guiding the narrative and creating the respective mood and atmosphere. The characteristic off-stage sounds and music of the *geza* serve vital roles for a similar purpose as they create the necessary sound effects and signals (most evident in the sinking of the ship) and guide the audiences' emotional responses with prescribed music.[38]

In Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, II.iv opens as a parallel to I.i with Orsino calling for some music and an "old an antic song" (II.iv.3)[39] to relieve his passion "Of these most brisk and

[37] See Marcuse, *Musical Instruments*, 229-31 for a history of the instrument's development.
[38] See Malm, *Traditional Japanese Music and Musical Instruments*, 241-6 for an explanation of the importance of *geza* music in Kabuki.
[39] All references are taken from the Arden Shakespeare edition of *Twelfth Night*.

giddy-paced times" (II.iv.6). Feste enters and sings a clown's song "Come away, come away death." *NINAGAWA* 十二夜 (*Twelfth Night*) significantly introduces II.iv as a new Act in the performance with curtains opening (after an interval) to a Kabuki *nihon buyō* (日本舞踊, Japanese classical dance). In place of Feste singing a melancholic tune of love lost and a death caused by a broken heart, Ninagawa replaces it, strategically, with a dance by Viola / Cesario [Disc 1, Chap 20 1:35:40]. The *hyoshigi* (拍子木, wooden clappers) marks the beginning of this 'play-within-a-play' as the voice of a *gidayu* is heard singing a *nagauta* (長唄, a lyrical genre of vocal music accompanied by a *shamisen*). As Cesario begins his dance, the secondary curtain is drawn revealing the *debayashi* – an ensemble of *tsuzumi* players, *shamisen* players and singers seated at the back of the stage and set on tiers.[40] The *nihon-buyō* or *kabuki buyō* serves both a performative function and a narrative one. As a performative event, whose performance evokes the aesthetic sophistication of the *buyō* form, Cesario's dance becomes a site for an intracultural hybridity since the kabuki dance in its current practice is "an assimilation of different styles while providing a basic common denominator that makes the originally very divergent styles recognisable as genuine *kabuki buyō*" (Ortolani 191). This *nagauta* dance piece, established by the chant of the *gidayu* and the accompaniment of *shamisen* music (愛方, *aikata*) which is consequently responded to by the chorus and the musicians (*hayashigata*), asserts its cultural authority and dominance in spite of this being performed to the narrative of a Western text. More significantly, the *buyō* showcases the versatility of the Kabuki form in incorporating and assimilating 'foreign' elements and integrating them as part of the established tradition. Members of the audience, in particular the Japanese audience, clap and cheer when Onoe Kikunosuke V,[41] as Cesario, executes the distinctive poses (*kata*) such as the *mie* and the backward bend [Disc 1, Chap 25 1:39:51]. The applause at the end of the dance testifies to this highly performative moment which is at once a tribute to Kabuki's sophistication as an art, and the performers' virtuosity (in particular Onoe Kinosuke), as well as a celebration of its authenticity as it engages with a foreign text.[42]

As narrative device, the *buyō* combines both masculine and feminine movements, communicating the energies of both genders as a performative 'in-between.' These energies are

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[40] See the section "Dance" contained in the sub-title "Enjoying Kabuki" of Sochiku Grand Kabuki's website for *Twelfth Night* <http://www.kabuki-bito.jp/juniya/en/> for an image of the dance as well as the *debayashi*. For more information about *debayashi*, see Malm, *Traditional Japanese Music and Musical Instruments*, 240-1.

[41] Onoe Kikunosuke V (1977) comes from a line of famous Kabuki actors who have played the role of the *onnagata*. His father, Onoe Kikugorō VII (1942), is heir to an illustrious name in the Kabuki world with him being the latest in a lineage of famous actors dating back to the 18th century.

[42] I am here referring to the 2007 DVD production which was filmed in Tokyo as well as my experience at London's Barbican in 2009.

not merely signified by the movements and gestures which become more fluid and contained as the dance progresses, or the instruments of use (such as the pole which is used at the beginning of the dance, and the classical icon of the fan) but the performing body of a male playing a female role that plays a male role performing a dance – the *onnagata* (女形) tradition.[43] The recurrent and principal theme and narrative concern of cross-dressing, gender duplicity, identity doubling and sexual ambiguity located in Shakespeare's text finds apt personification on the Japanese stage in the Japanese *onnagata*. Contained within a single performing body is the duality of genders and an androgynous ambiguity, and even a hermaphrodite tendency that is beyond a costume change; there is a continuity embodied within the actor's body. There is hence a 'translation' of languages from the linguistic to the bodily as these concerns are performed. Seen through the lens of cultural politics, the *buyō* asserts a cultural ascendancy through a usurpation of a renowned Western dramatic text and performing it in ways 'truer' and more fitting than the West's own modern performance conventions can find a language for since this performance of subversive sexuality is communicated beyond mere outward signifiers of costume and the theatrical masks of make-up but one rooted in expressive movement, formal gesture, kinaesthetics and stylisation framed by an identifiable tradition and established form.

As an act of acoustic interculturalism, this *nagauta* accompanied by the *buyō* reinforce the dominance of the Japanese 'frame.' While it contrasts with the opening scene of the play, since the former employs a Western tune sung by boy sopranos akin to the boy actors who performed on the Elizabethan stage, the cultural-political implications remain the same for here the affinity, preservation and presentation of a uniquely Japanese dramatic performance form underscores the cultural imposition and aggressive assimilation of a foreign text made distinctly 'local.' The 'local' is now reinvented, renewed yet marketed and internationalised as time-honoured tradition.

"One face, one voice, one habit, and two persons": Vocal Twinning and Cultural Doubling

The predominant concern of *Twelfth Night* is gender; it is arguably about the dissolution of stable polarities and is as much about the in-between spaces as it is about "the fashioning of gender" (Charles 124) through performance. Gender is as such performative. Illusionism that leads to ambiguity is the very substance of the theatrical experience in *Twelfth Night*, where Viola embodies this ambiguity effected through the illusion of disguise. On the Shakespearean

[43] More will be discussed about the gendered implications of the *onnagata* in the next section.

stage, the 'double' cross-dressing convention (boy playing girl disguised as man) complicates gender relations on the dramatic and meta-dramatic levels. On stage, the three contingent dimensions of Viola/Cesario's corporeality, her physiological sex as a boy actor, her gender identity in the drama as a woman, and her gender performance as Cesario, encourage the audience to view her/him as a sexually enticing *qua* transvestised boy (Jardine 31, Charles 130). Because her gender is consistently the ulterior topic of conversation when she is present (I.v.185, I.v.158-161, III.i.143), the audience's eyes are invited to dwell upon the actor's body as a *pretty* boy, inadvertently stimulating homoerotic desire. Her/his multiple-disguised presence triggers an attraction in both genders, within the fiction of Shakespeare's Illyria and the non-fiction of the international audience at the Barbican.

While the Elizabethan stage employed boy actors to speak the roles of women as they cross-dress in partlets, petticoats, and corsets, Kabuki modulates gender (stereo)types by the use of the *onnagata*. The erotic appeal of a 'pretty boy' is accentuated and underscored by Kabuki's long tradition of the *onnagata*, whose cross-dressing tendencies have played up the 'beauty' of the boy / female gender and the in-betweens of sexual polarities with the implementation of an all-male ensemble resulting from actresses being banned from the stage in 1629. Like the Elizabethan stage, early Kabuki in the 17 century featured young boys playing female roles thereby emphasizing their feminine beauty (Morinaga 247). The *onnagata* is, infamously, a male actor playing a female role; it means literally "female form" or "female impersonator" (ibid. 243), and this tradition of the *onnagata*, though having gone through stylistic changes over the centuries dates back to the beginnings of the all-male Kabuki. In the *onnagata*, the audience finds a "beautiful illusory woman who is often said to be more feminine than real women" (Takakuwa 202) such that modern day performances of Kabuki do not employ real women to perform female roles as that would now appear "far too natural" ("Enjoying Kabuki," *Shochiku Grand Kabuki Twelfth Night*). The *onnagata's* art "enables him to keep the balance between becoming the *onnagata* as a 'fictitious' woman and revealing his 'real' identity as a man" (Takakuwa 202). As much as femininity becomes therefore impersonation (ibid.), gender, as essence (if any), is made unstable, interrogated as performative concept and social construction. Consequently, Stephen Heath summarises this sexual positioning well when he writes

> There is no such thing as sexuality; what we have experienced and are experiencing is the fabrication of a "sexuality," the construction of something called "sexuality" through a set of representations – images, discourses, ways of picturing and describing – that propose to confirm, that make up this sexuality to which we are then referred and held in our lives, a whole sexual fix precisely (3).

Kabuki thus seems to be the ideal performance tradition to corporealise ideas of gender impersonation, cross-sexual desire and "fabrications of sexuality" located in Shakespeare's play. Ninagawa finds a performance language, in its history and tradition, to 'interweave' two diverse performance cultures of the East and West and employ it, to contesting views on its success, as a dramaturgical medium of intercultural articulation. The androgynous aesthetics is effectively constructed, beyond the visual signifiers in particular the costumes (known as *ishō* [衣裳] in Kabuki) but with the voice – the falsettos of the *onnagata*, the modulations, cross-overs, and timbral variations consequent of the wide range of vocal production, break gendered acoustemologies consistently as s/he becomes a figure of both male and female sexuality eliciting both male and female desire, of which, ironically, is represented by the victim Olivia who is herself an *onnagata*. The power and effect of the *onnagata*, in eliciting erotic (and contestably romantic) responses, is evidenced in the narrative with Olivia's attraction to Viola / Cesario, as well as in the responses of the audience who applause when they witness the change of roles adopted by Onoe Kikunosuke V.[44]

These sexual tensions and gender dissolutions performed by the voice(s) of the *onnagata*(s) is evident in what is a parallel of Act I Scene V – the first meeting between Viola / Cesario and Olivia [Disc 1, Chap 11 51:12]. The conversation between Viola / Cesario and Olivia mirror the identity confusions and disavowals when Olivia refuses to reveal her identity as the lady of the house till such time she knows who this messenger is. In an exchange of wit that masks the sexual tensions and attractions located within the narrative and further adumbrated by the performing bodies, Olivia eventually agrees to reveal her face garnering attention from Viola / Cesario about her beauty. Orsino's quest for Olivia's hand becomes a secondary concern to Olivia who outrightly rejects the suit and instead recognises, with the closing of the scene, her sudden infatuation with the boy messenger. In Ninagawa's Kabuki adaptation, the scene is performed as an interaction between two *onnagatas* whose concealed masculinities become performatively salient in this autoreflexive scene. Nakamura Tokizo V modulates his role as an *Akahime* (赤姫) or 'Red Princess' – a convention used by *onnagata* actors to portray aristocratic young women – with his skilful control of the falsetto timbre; Onoe Kikunosuke V embodies the sexual ambiguity and transitions through an interplay of vocal range and timbre, in his performance of a male acting as a female playing a male. In this scene, the voice that is the medium of a gender (and cultural) 'translation' becomes foregrounded as Viola, in disguise as Cesario, makes an accidental vocal 'break' and speaks in a high falsetto (Disc One Chap 12 55:30) when s/he momentarily forgets '*him*-self' as she relates to Olivia Orsino's "comfortable doctrine" (I.v.225). This dramatically comic moment certainly serves to play up the comic

[44] I refer here to Japanese members of the audience of the Barbican performance that I was present at.

elements in what is still regarded as one of Shakespeare's best comedies of gender con-fusion. Yet it can also be regarded as an autoreflexive moment of the power of the *onnagata* to play with concepts of gender and prove them to be social performances determined by social circumstance. As Katherine Mezur notes, "contemporary *onnagata* inscribe gender into their voices according to role types" (194). Onoe Kikunosuke's periodic 'slips' in and out of the male and female registers, bordering consistently on the middle ranges of a high tenor (and even counter-tenor) performs through the voice, with adherence to the performance traditions, the androgyny and bi-sexuality that is Viola. Because the heavy white make-up (化粧, *keshou*) on Kikunosuke masks the differences as physical distinctions, the voice is that which renders this transformation "[a] natural perspective, that is, and is not!" (V.i.215).

The interstices of cultural negotiation is, as discussed, located in an acoustemology of the voice – its versatility, range, colour and timbre – that evokes the essential concerns and the comedy of confusion that is the plot of *Twelfth Night*. It is the musicality of their voice that is the focus of their performance and less what is said for as Leonard Pronko observes

> [i]n Kabuki we often forget the words and their meaning, and are suddenly aware that the voice, as an instrument, has an artistic function in the theatre. Indeed, the actor's vocal range is so enormous, the emotional colourings so intense, that all reactions are heightened (149).

In hearing the voice of the *onnagata*, we hear the (dis)locations of gender. Though speaking of the Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre, Linda Phyllis Austern's views regarding the erotic evocations of the boy-actor on the stage apply to Kabuki. She believes that the registers of the boy-actor and their gendered ambiguity result in "gender [becoming] a topsy-turvy game in which illusion and reality continually merged, only to be shattered into kaleidoscopic fragments by a single word or gesture" (Austern 86). The ambiguities of gender are underscored by the voices of these gender 'in-betweens.' Like the boy-actors of the Elizabethan stage, and perhaps more powerfully so with *onnagatas*, many who have been trained in the role as young children and continue to perform it late into their adult lives, the voices elicit a dangerous eroticism and costumed beauty making their music dangerous to the listener for through the voice of an apparent man or woman, these vocal musics can be perceived to have the capacity to "arouse the senses with a rhetoric far more powerful than speech alone, and in a more lingering manner than vision" (Austern 90).

In the *onnagata*'s voice, Ninagawa finds a performative (acoustic) trajectory to interweave Eastern practices and a Western text. Through the sonic manipulation of the voice, its flexibility in modulating registers and distorting conventions of gendered vocalisms,

phonation becomes one of the primary means of evoking the sensual and sensuous responses of experiencing *Twelfth Night*. By employing centuries of unchanging performance traditions, Shakespeare's romantic comedy of cross-dressing confusion becomes threatened by androgynous beauty, sexual ambivalence, social transgression and homoeroticism, thus adding to what many Shakespearean critics, such as C.L. Barber, have posited regarding the play's "bright revel [emerging] from shadow" (Barber 259). The male-to-male gaze and the homoerotic metadrama of a male Viola (playing a male Cesario) courted by a male Olivia is further validated by the role-type Onoe Kikunosuke assumes – the *wakashu*. The *wakashu* is an adolescent male type and the role, on or off stage, embodies the longstanding ***bishōnen*** (美少年, literally 'beautiful boy' or 'youth') eros and aesthetic which, historically, drove their audiences mad (Matošec 66). This beauty of their bodies was amplified by the costuming, hairstyles and certainly the voice as is evident in Ningawa's production of a 'pretty' Viola / Cesario. Historically, the Japan of the early Edo period (江戸時代) recognised the traditions of a *wakashu* having *shudō* (or *wakashudō*, 若者の, literally 'the way of youths') relationships with samurai. These *shudō* relationships not only included a master-pupil mentorship in the ways of the warrior but also included sexual intimacy and intercourse.[45] The popular long-standing practices of Kabuki and its aesthetic of gender deconstruction and ambiguity allow Shakespeare's text to be effectively enunciated by a traditional performance mode from the East. The form's popularity and practice as tradition lend further credence to a critical view of how Asia could communicate Shakespeare more effectively than 'Shakespeare' can.

"You do think you are not what you are": (Echo)Locating the Intercultural Other

In the final scene of *NINAGAWA* 十二夜 (*Twelfth Night*) as the knots of confusion are untangled and Feste emerges, accompanied by the tunes of the *shamisen*, to 'sing' a song and leave the audience with parting words of wisdom, as he does in Shakespeare's text, the sounds of the violin and harpsichord are heard [Chap 19 1:37:49]. To these sounds, the wedded couples of Viola and Orsino and Olivia and Sebastian parade out onto the stage crossing the 'red bridge.' In the closing moments of the performance as all characters come on stage waving goodbye to Feste who has now decided to leave the service of Orsino, a chorus song that weaves the tunes of the harpsichord and the bass drummings of the *taiko* are played. These acoustic gestures seem to signify, through a self-conscious performance, an intercultural resolution that abides

[45] See Matošec, *"Female Voice in Male Bodies": Castrati, Onnagata and the Performance of Gender through Ambiguous Bodies and Vocal Acts*, particularly Chapter 3 for a comprehensive overview of the development of the *wakashu* role as part of the *onnagata* tradition.

by the comic resolution found in Shakespeare's text. It is here enunciated not only in the dramatic narrative but a musical one as well. Considered further, it affirms the intercultural acoustemologies of the performance and the ways in which the popularization of sound, and sound's popularity, can be used as a means of negotiating cultures in performance and cultures of performance.

Lin and Ninagawa's productions, though employing distinct strategies and languages to enunciate the intercultural, both perform an 'echolocation' of the self through a 'localisation' of form and content, theme and text. In the process of echolocation, humans and animals are able to derive a sense of place and positionality by generating sound waves that reverberate and bounce back in its confrontation with a hard object. Consequently, one is able to navigate effectively, without sight, by listening to the sound waves. In constructing an Asian 'self,' both productions employ sound and music to echolocate by listening to the self through the Other while (counter) appropriating the popularity of Western pop songs and music as a means of composing an intercultural soundscape. These interculturalisms are not attempts at mimicry or a dissonant potlatch of cultural representation but an attempt to redefine an Asian self that is not Other through a listening with the ear of the (Western) Other.

What both productions testify to is the ways in which consumption is a creative activity, a way of transforming the commodities that the dominant culture assumes will be passively ingested. Consumers thereby become active participants in the processes of both production and consumption, constantly adapting the material conditions of the dominant culture to their own needs. As Claire Sponsler observes of cross-cultural performance, "through acts of cross-cultural poaching, performances and their audiences are able to imagine alternate possibilities for selfhood while also negotiating anxieties about racial, gender and national differences" (3). In *Richard III*, Lin does not 'passively' consume Western theatrical practices and styles though the dominant mode of performance is clearly that of *huaju* - a form influenced by Western realism. By appropriating the popularity of pop-rock, and employing a pop aesthetic for an acoustic strategy as means of subversion and conversion, Lin re-crafts the image of China and Chinese performance as archaic and exotic. *Richard III* is as much contemporary as it is local. Though Ninagawa retains the dominant frame of Kabuki as a performative approach to the dramatisation of *Twelfth Night*, the interculturalisms are heard markedly as acoustics that are foreign yet familiar. The sonic frequencies of Western classical instruments and a popular advent carol reconfigures one's comprehension of the East-of-West dialectics through an (aural) interplay of the familiar and foreign, the new and traditional. In so doing, Ninagawa stages a *Twelfth Night* that could arguably be a performance more 'authentic' and 'true' to both Shakespeare's text and the tradition of Kabuki.

The acoustic interweavings in both productions are not attempts at dissolving differences in cultural forms nor is it a performative strategy of 'sameness.' Seen through the lens of cultural politics, since musical experience is social experience and social experience is inherently political, these sounds accentuate conditions of alterity. Recognising the cultural acoustemologies of sound, and consciously exploiting these differences both Lin and Ninagawa redefine, in their respective productions, an acoustic interculturalism, one that utilises differences in cultural acoustemologies and not universals in originating Other-Shakespeares.

Chapter 4

Listening In/To Asia: Ong Keng Sen's *Desdemona* and the Polyphonies of Asia

Zeros and Os: (Re)Presenting the (Inter)Cultural

In the opening sequence of Singaporean Director Ong Keng Sen's controversial intercultural project entitled *Desdemona*, Singaporean Chinese actress Claire Wong, in the role of Desdemona, is seen, on projection screens mounted above the stage, to be at once entrapped yet attempting to emerge from a giant virtualised 'O' that envelops her [00:01:53]. This mediatised and mediated action, consequent of installation artist's Matthew Ngui's creative placement and positioning of video cameras that capture a circular complimentarity in an anamorphic frame of fractured plywood boards painted with sections of Zeros/Os, metadramatically stages the problems of intercultural performances that seek to locate, present or perform (a concept of) Asia.

Ngui's strategy of anamorphosis invariably questions, as visual narrative, the stability of representation and the adoption of a singular viewpoint. Anamorphosis refers to a distorted or fragmented image that, when viewed from a specified angle, comes together at a single point. Characteristic of Ngui's artistic signature, the anamorphic 'O' performs as metaphor on several planes: as the deconstruction of the authority of (Shakespeare's) text, the distortion of archetypal performance portrayals of Othello as character (and racial Other), and the disruption of holistic and monolithic representations of Asia. Because anamorphosis suggests flux, change, fragmentation and distinction it is an apt visual mechanism to purport the impossibilities of staging Asia.

Seen on the video screens, the anamorphic 'O' becomes complete in simulation – with it being metonymical of the simulacrum that is the theatrical event of *Desdemona*. This all-consuming Zero/O also gestures at this dramatic moment, as theatrical device, to the omnipotence and omnipresence of Othello, and the fragmentation of his identity and authority in the course of the play – a fate that comes full circle. In Scene 4 [00:17:05], Madhu Margi, as Othello, enters the space of performance and chants, in the tradition of Indian *Kutiyattam*, the question "Who am I, What am I [...] Do I exist?" The meditative chant, sung in consistency with the repetitive tonal glides and tremolos done in repetition corporealises, sonically, the question of (cultural) identity dislocation. The zero becomes a recurring leitmotif with consistent references and images of Zero/O throughout the performance. Supplementary characters are all named 'Zeros' in a directorial attempt to erase identity-differentiation and whitewash the presence of the actor/character with absence. Such an act of erasure is certainly intentional since most characters, apart from the dual Othellos, don white (or black) gauze-like costumes that are identical. For Ong, zero holds a fascination since it is "the beginning, [...] is the end, [...] is negative space, [...] is absence, [...] is shadow, [...] is the echo, [...] is the reflection, is the trace, [...] is the source, [and] is the process" (Director's Notes, Singapore Programme). Beyond

its ontological mystery, Zero/O can also be regarded as a performative prop that stages an erasure and absence of the production as an Asian intercultural project. More significantly, it is metonymic of Asia as cultural identity.

Desdemona is Ong's attempt at deconstructing, and reconstructing, the bard's work along with all earlier interpretations of the text in particular the "obsessive stereotyping of black machismo" (Director's Notes, Singapore Programme) while underscoring the elements of culture and race, framed in the context of a New Asia. Having premiered at the Adelaide Festival in 2000, *Desdemona* subsequently toured the Munich Dance Festival, the Singapore and Hamburg Arts Festivals and became a visual arts exhibition / performance / outreach programme at the Fukuoka Asian Art Museum. Cited as "a journey through difference in Asia, traditional performing arts, gender, ritual and contemporary art" (ibid.) and in accordance with its aim to reinvent intercultural theatre itself, the performance employed a multiplicity of cultural styles and placed in discomforting confrontation antiquity and modernity. The mise en scène was woven with Indian *Kathakali*, *Kutiyattam* (a 2,000 year-old Sanskrit theatre form), Myanmarese puppetry (known as *yokthe pwe*), Yogyanese dance, and a Malayan martial arts form known as *pancak silat*. These traditional forms were violently juxtaposed against a background of video sequences and installation art, popular archetypes of artistic avant-gardism today, that sought to peel away the epidermis of dramatic fiction and expose the visceral structures of performance. The visual text coalesced with a soundscape of ancient Korean court music[1] and folk sounds, shamanist ritual, along with interjections of the *p'ansori* (판소리) tradition (a genre of Korean vocal story-telling music).

Such interplays performance genres are not new since *Desdemona* is the second of Ong's intercultural Shakespeare trilogy, the first of which was *Lear*, premiered in Tokyo in 1997, and the final being a site-specific performance *Search Hamlet* staged at Kronborg castle, Elsinore in 2002. These three productions are the culminations of a larger ambition of creating a series of inter-cultural collaborations between artists in Asia. Established in 1995, conceived by Ong and *Theatreworks*, of which he is Artistic Director, and entitled *The Flying Circus Project*, the long-term multi-disciplinary performance research and development programme seeks to

[1] There are 2 broad categories of Korean Court Music: Ritual Music which includes Confucian Temple Music (*munmyo cheryeark*) and Ancestral Shrine Music (*chongmyo cheryeak*) and Banquet/Military Music which includes *Hyangak* (향악, banquet music of korean music), *Tangak* (당악, music of the Tang Dynasty), and military processional music. See Song Bang-Song, "A Short History of Korean Traditional Music" in *Korean Music: Historical and Other Aspects*, 40-42. Korean court music can also be considered, more commonly, in three genres: *a'ak* (아악) which literally means elegant music but more accurately refers to an imported form of Chinese ritual music (transmigrated some time in 116AD) and differs itself from traditional Korean music. *Hyangak* is the second genre that is akin to the traditional tunes and folk dances. It literally means 'village music,' *Tangak* refers to the Tang music adapted from the Tang Dynasty during the unified Silla period in the first millennium. See Hwang Byong-ki, "Aesthetic Characteristics of Korean Music in Theory and in Practice," *Asian Music* 9:2 (1978), 29-40.

find a theatrical language that negotiates cultural diversity and represent the interactions between traditional and contemporary through 'collisions' rather than correspondences.[2] The project also provides a platform for experimentation by individual Asian artists who seek to restore, reinvigorate, and popularise traditional performance forms which are now rapidly vanishing with progress and modernity.

Desdemona thus, like *Lear* that came before and *Hamlet* after, was a spectacle of 'collisions' and 'negotiations.' Concordance and harmony, visual or auditory, was discarded for a performance of confrontations. According to *Desdemona*'s music director Jang Jae Hyo, "the music [of *Desdemona*] can be said to be a symbol of the entire production" (Programme Notes). If this is so, a study of its composition, properties, and use – the soundscape of silences, sonorities, and (dis)harmonies – might resonate with some understanding of the issues and concerns an Asian intercultural performance can produce. Music historian Veit Erlman, in "But what of the Ethnographic Ear?", suggests that new knowledge can be gained about other cultures and of how members of a society know each other from a process of listening (3). Developing on a similar trope but with greater critical importance placed on the role of the listener and his/her relation to the object/person of sound, Laurent Aubert asserts that a discovery of the music of the other is a transcultural experience in which the perception of the other in his or her difference mingles intimately with that of our own sensitivity vis-à-vis the other (xii). Music, in particular, not only serves as a unifying means of communication, it is also a "revealer of identity" (Aubert 1) and a "resonant representation of social structures" (ibid. 3). If sound can negotiate cultures while revealing audially a concept of culture, the acoustic properties of *Desdemona* might provide (aural) insights into the identity and representation(s) of Asia on the intercultural stage, and interrogate a notion of an 'Asian' culture embodied in a performance tradition.

Bruce Smith's secondary title to his seminal work *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England* reflects a keen discursive shift that calls for greater attentiveness to acoustic ecologies, and is also an apt account of what this chapter seeks to examine. Subtitled *Attending to the O-Factor*, 'O' for Smith is the encompassing symbol of all human sounds. In addition to the Zero/O that is at once a performative prop, leitmotif, metaphysical aporia, anagrammatic symbol of Othello, and acronym of Shakespeare's play, 'O' according to Smith "defines the perceptual limits of reverberating sound" (*Acoustic World* 10) since sound "subsumes me: it is continuously present, pulsing within my body, penetrating my body from without, filling my perceptual world to the very horizons of hearing" (ibid.). For Smith 'O' is an apt spherical

[2] See "The Flying Circus Project" website, <http://theatreworks.org.sg/archive/intercultural/flying_circus_project04/index.htm> for more information. See also *Desdemona* Programme Notes, Singapore Programme.

symbol that is at once an act of communication (for example pre-linguistic expressions such as 'Oh' or primal sounds such as [o:]), a sensory experience (as something that is heard), and a political act since the verbal production of what Smith considers to be the most rudimentary of vocal sounds is an act done with, for or to an-other party through means of interlocution.[3] Attending to the 'O' factor provides one understanding of the acoustic ecology in the larger contexts of time and space through a process of historical phenomenology. We listen to the sounds of, and in, time and space. In experiencing these acoustic contexts, 'meaning' is revealed through an aural perception.

While this chapter does not seek to establish a historical phenomenology of pre-modern Asia, it seeks to 'attend' to the 'O' factor of *Desdemona* – here as an acoustic phenomenon that echoes with harmonic representations of Asias on the stage. The chapter will consequently examine specifically the soundscapes of *Desdemona* and the ways in which sound may engender cultural signatures and interrogate the notion of 'Asia' through an examination of its acoustemologies. It will consider closely the concept of an 'intercultural voice' and extend the question of (re)sounding to one of listening in/to Asia. In contrast to many Western intercultural performances which compose an Oriental(ist) soundscape by *hearing* with Occidental ossicles, this chapter seeks to consider how Asia *listens* to herself and performs an Asian 'self' acoustically. In performing Asia by Asia, *Desdemona* challenges the polemics long unchallenged in intercultural discourse – that of Self and Other. Such a view is validated by how Ong regards himself distinctly as a modern cosmopolitan Asian re-making intercultural performance in reaction to Western practices advocated by Ariane Mnouchkine. Ong's marketed success in the international circuit is, undoubtedly, founded on an Asian tone (skin and voice) where his identity as hybrid Chinese Singaporean is often the focus in reviews and criticism. While Ong cannot, with certainty, be regarded as representative of Asian practitioners of interculturalism, his works remark on the possibilities of how Asia constructs a self-image. The analysis in this chapter, while keeping these questions and considerations at the fore, will employ several strategies to determine a hermeneutics of listening to the intercultural. In an intercultural project such as *Desdemona* where the means and purposes of musical forms have been appropriated, hybridised and juxtaposed with other traditional and contemporary musics, the performative implications can be understood via an ethnomusicological evaluation for such an approach validates an understanding of transformation in cultural sounds. A phenomenological approach, or akoumenology, is also valuable since it prizes the "fullness and richness and the global character of experience"

[3] See Bruce Smith, *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England*, 3-29 for a deeper explication on the three ways of considering 'O.'

(*Listening and Voice* 21). According to postphenomenologist Don Ihde, "the examination of sound begins with a phenomenology" (*Listening and Voice* 17). Any discussion of a separation of senses into discrete faculties is an empirical one and not phenomenological but through the concentration on auditory experience, "a re-evaluation of all the 'senses' is implied" (Ihde, *Listening and Voice* 21); it permits a point of focus and originates a reconsideration of experience through the aural senses that could possibly engender new significances.

Performative Failure and the Failure of Performance

Lear's success was marked by its spectacle and the radicalism of a new-style interculturalism that was re-marked against a Western source-target appropriation of Eastern forms. It celebrated the multiplicity and authority of Asian performance traditions such as Japanese Noh (能) and Chinese *jingju* (京剧) while demonstrating New Asia's ability to appropriate Shakespeare and make relevant the Western archetype for an Asian palette.[4] The various performance styles retained their modes of authenticity with each performer speaking their native tongue and performing in their respective traditions.[5]

While *Lear* was a resuscitation of Asian performance genres presented harmoniously via a tightly-woven linear narrative, *Desdemona* was, as Yong Li Lan aptly phrases, a performative reversal ("Intercultural Performative" 269). It was all that *Lear* was not and intentionally so. Ong desired a second Asian Shakespeare tragedy that would engage audiences as a "journey through difference" (Director's Notes, Singapore Programme) and "a performance of contradictions between the traditional and contemporary that was exposed rather than glossed in unity" (Ong KS, "Encounters" 127). Ong laments,

> After *Lear* [...] I had become dissatisfied with simply directing an Asian production that juxtaposed many different languages and many different traditional expressions. I felt that I had to take a more critical and reflexive look at the process that I was engaging in. What was behind the mask of the impeccable precision of the *Lear* that I had directed? How do I allow the intercultural process to deliberately peep through at the seams of a new work? (Director's Notes, Singapore Programme)

Desdemona, as this new work, not only "peeped through the seams" but also 'glared' belligerently at its predecessor – in an act of matricide akin to the patricide that occurs at the

[4] Craig Latrell, in "After Appropriation," critically observes how interculturalism is not the simplistic one-way street of a Western appropriation and exploitation of other cultures traditions but that the currents of cross-cultural production work in reverse as well. See *The Drama Review* 44.4 (2000): 44-55.

[5] For a thorough discussion on *Lear*, see my paper 'Thou art a strange fellow': Dissonance and Discordance in Intercultural Shakespeares in *Shakespeare's World / World Shakespeare: The Selected Proceedings of the International Shakespeare Association World Congress Brisbane, 2006*, 371-381.

end of *Lear* - and at a confounded audience. It is for this reason *Desdemona*, of the three Shakespeare trilogy productions, remains the prime choice for examining the intercultural as it was a pastiche of traditions and confusions. Its seams were the splinters of performance traditions that were heavily adapted and reinvented in the search for a new theatrical language to speak of the intercultural. In juxtaposition to video projections, live video feeds, email correspondences, and installation art, the production thrived on spaces of rupture, disjuncture, dislocation and irresolution. The production advanced the dislocation of cultural interaction and the spaces between in all of its performative languages including sound and music. As brainchild of Ong's, this 'shattered mirror'[6] that is *Desdemona* became a self-reflexive attempt to stage the identity politics of Asia, and its performance forms, today – a New Asia of the globalised economy driven by the engines of capitalism and consumed by a material monoculture. It was about "a group of Asian artists looking at [them]selves and rethinking the way Asia has been represented on the stage" (Ong KS, "Encounters" 129). *Desdemona* thus served to be a performance research into the "study of culture" (ibid.) and the inter-activity of cultures in conversation.

A new strategy was needed to deconstruct the dichotomies of familiar/foreign, tradition/modernity, live/mediated performances in order to escape the predicaments of intercultural performance resultant from Western approaches and their *subject-ification* of Asian traditions to Western theatrical discourses. Yet this act of introspection on the problems and possibilities of interculturalism on the stage enacted its own failure it sought to escape from. Ong presented Asian elements on the stage as fragments of and dislocations from their cultural and contextual origin – and perhaps intentionally so. Maya Krishna Rao, who plays a female-double of Othello, performed an adaptive *Kathakali* that incorporated aggressive animalistic movements without the vestimentary and cosmetic elaborations of that tradition; Madhu Margi's Othello was performed in the style of *Kutiyattam* with the elaborate costume and highly codified make-up removed. *Pancak silat* was reduced to generalised movements of wide steps, broad gestures and a stern demeanour. Performers often broke from the rhythm and development of formalised movements into an abrupt shift of style (Yong, "Intercultural Performative" 265). These 'shifts of styles' indicated a discomforting umbilical relationship to their respective 'traditions' – at once a desire to represent and re-present. The defamiliarised performances and performers, already alienating because of their status of antiquation and foreignness in contemporary revival of traditional cultural dance and performance repertoire adumbrated by decontextualisation and loose styles of adaptation, were then placed in random

[6] This is an allusion to Jenny De Reuck's article on Ong's *Lear* entitled "'The mirror shattered into tiny pieces': Reading Gender and Culture in the Japan Foundation Asia Center's *Lear*." *Intersections: Gender, History and Culture in the Asian Context* 3 (2000) <http://intersections.anu.edu.au/issue3/jenny3.html>

conjunction held loosely by an anti-linear narrative of Desdemona's revenge against Othello. The performance of Asian cultures was merely, as Rustom Bharucha disdainfully describes, "an encapsulation of cryptic images, subsumed in a high-tech multimedia presentation [with performance traditions] glibly decontextualised within a fragmented 'postmodern' narrative" ("Consumed in Singapore" 125). Yong remarks on this performative failure lucidly and it is worth quoting at length.

> [...] [T]he plurality of Asian performances was hardly directed at confronting or re-negotiating the East-West binary invoked by Asian Shakespeare; instead, it agglomerated an Asia that was presented through fragments dislocated from their social contexts of performance. Relations between Asian cultures, and between these and Shakespeare, were presented as disparities in performance styles that evoked and contrasted cultures which could not be located in real terms [...] very little of Shakespeare's *Othello* remained in *Desdemona*, and the merest outline of a plot acted as a premise to theatricalise the gaps between Asian cultures, between old and new mediums of performance, and between attitudes to these. The performance enacted the *cultural dislocation and a dissolution of context* [...] ("Intercultural Performative" 254-255, own italics).

Desdemona's performative failure can be examined at several levels with the most apparent being its failure as a performance. Contrary to the *Erwartungshorizont*, the performance received harsh reviews both in Adelaide and Singapore with one Singaporean arts reviewer Phan Ming Yen calling it "the greatest piece of shit [...] seen on stage. The haphazard assembling of elements under the guise of 'process' confounds and insults the audience" (cited in Oon, "Ugly Stepsister"). Singapore Arts Festival director, Mr Liew Chin Choy, rated *Desdemona* among "the most boring and uninspiring productions of the festival" ("Show That Put Some to Sleep"). Australia's premiere performance broadsheet, *Realtime*, rejected an offer to review the performance for they felt there was nothing 'special' (Grehan 117). In its antitheatricality, its docu-performative self-reflexivity, *Desdemona* failed for it confounded its audience and defied interpretative sensibilities and meaning-making. There was, as William Peterson notes, "a vast chasm between intent and possible audience interpretation" (88). Anne Ubersfeld's observations about the dynamics of audience reception and performance intention might shed light on the failure of *Desdemona* as theatrical event when she notes how

> the most extreme problem with response is when either too many demands are made on the spectators so that they withdraw their participation or audience members are unwilling to make any attempt to respond to the performance and therefore withdraw their participation (133).

In *Desdemona*, the desire to participate or respond by being active elements in the reception of the performance, a fundamental process in reception aesthetics propounded by Hans Robert Jauss in *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, was consistently disrupted by the foreignness of the spectacle and soundscape. This foreignness is not merely one of a foreign culture encountered by the 'I' that recognises an alterity but a foreignness that remains absolute as a consequence of the double alterity embodied in the performance – of the alienness of forlorn cultural performance forms and of these forms dislocated and decontextualised to be reassembled as theatrical pastiche. Furthermore, beyond its failure to communicate *Desdemona* performed a failure of an Asian self-image for it reified the alterity of Asian-nesses on stage and radicalised Otherness for Asian selves.

Cultural Cadence, Performative Rhythm: The Beats of Asia(s)

The deconstruction and estrangement of Asian identities that is also the performative failure of *Desdemona* could also be best evinced by a deep listening to the soundscape of the performance. Two Korean musicians, Jang Jae Hyo and Shin Chang Yool, were responsible for the music of *Desdemona*. The soundtrack was composed of Korean court and folk music, and the vocal tradition of *p'ansori* (판소리). A percussion ensemble consisting of the *kkwaenggwari* (꽹과리) (small lipped flat bronze gong struck with a wooden stick), *ching/jing* (징) (large flat lipped bronze gong struck with a mallet), *chang'gu* (장고) (hourglass drum), *buk/puk* (북) (shallow double-headed barrel drum), bells and cymbals were used. These were accompanied by an *ajaeng* (아쟁) – a seven-stringed zither played with a bow derived from the Chinese instrument *ya zheng* (轧箏), *piri* (피리) (double reed oboe) and *taegum* (대금) (large transverse flute). The instrumental sounds, along with the dronal chants of *Kutiyattam*, the high-pitched bells used for *yokthe pwe*, the inflexions and accents of ethnic performers speaking in native tongues, and the growls and grunts from Rao, engendered a soundscape that was alter-Asian.

To find a common musical language, Korean music director / composer Jang Jae Hyo decided on the extensive use of percussive sounds. Jang explains that in an intercultural procedure such as *Desdemona* where

> language, thoughts and cultures differ, we have to find a music that can speak to as many people as possible. So let there be more rhythms than complex patterns. And that is the strength of Korean traditional music, in my view (Singapore Programme).

Rhythm seems to be the 'universal' element of all musics and the indispensable quality of sound that transcends cultural diversity since all organised sounds consist of the fundamental structure of rhythm. Jang's percussion sounds thus formed the vertebrae of the performance marking the dramatic pace, movement and mood while weaving together the disparate fragments of Asian performance forms.

The performance of the *changdan* or rhythmic cycles in *Desdemona* seems befitting for a performance of various styles even for Sanskrit *Kutiyattam* since it resembles the *tala* – the rhythmic/metric system employed in Indian music. These cycles of measures and cadences, tempo and pace, seemed a universal quality sufficient for the *buk*, *chang'gu* drums, and cymbals, to replace the *mizhavu* (large copper drum), *kuzhitalam* (bronze cymbals) and the *edakka* (hourglass-shaped drum).[7] Korean ethnomusicologist Song Bang-Song writes of how *tala*, the fundamental constituent of rhythm in Indian music, is seemingly similar to the Korean concept of *changdan*. *Tala* is time-measure conceived in cycles while *changdan* denotes organised temporal units composed of repeated rhythmic patterns. Both Indian and Korean music also emphasise the interpenetration of melody and rhythm without the polyphony and harmony of Western classical music.[8] Yet the similarities between these two systems of music, Song admits after careful study of a *sanjo* performance – a genre of solo instrumental music in Korea, and a *raga* performance – a performance of melodic modes or a selection of scale degrees found in Hindustani music, that though there are distinct similarities and resemblances in form, structure and rhythm, one should not make easy associations "without a careful study of the specific traditions and cultures of each country" (Song 296).

While an occasional listening to the soundscape of *Desdemona*, heavily punctuated with the deep tones of *buk* and the cyclical consistencies of the *ching* and *kkwaenggwari*, might advance Jang's views of a rhythmic universal as *the* strategy for an acoustic interculturalism, an ethnomusicological understanding of these cultural sounds – one that confronts with issues of contexts, histories, translations and transpositions – would possibly forward a different listening.

Considered within this ethnomusicological framework one recognises that the underscoring philosophy in any Asian music has always been the metaphysical and not merely the physical manifestations of sound. In Sanskrit theatre, the communication of *rasa* is the central concern and music has always been an indispensable feature of a theatrical

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[7] The other instruments employed in *Kutiyattam* include the *kuzhal* (double-reed pipe) and *Sankhu* (conch). These are at times added to form the ensemble *panchavadym* (five instruments). The *Mizhavu*, however, remains the most prominent and essential of these instruments underscoring the significance of *tala* (rhythm) in Indian music and theatre. The *Natyasastra* stipulates drums as the most indispensable instrument for performance. Its constant playing is hypnotic, ritualistic and sacred. See Shovana Narayan, *Indian Theatre and Dance Traditions*, 132.

[8] See Song Bang-Song, *Korean Music: Historical and Other Aspects*, 278, 296-97.

performance. *Rasa* is a transcendent mode of emotional awareness by which all aspects of a performance are integrated, an awareness that rises above the circumstances which awakened it (the poetic content, the stage spectacle, and the musical clues) and generalises the individual emotional states of the spectators into a single emotional 'field'. This is achieved by the fourfold aspects (also known as *abhinaya*) of *Kutiyattam* performance: *vacika* (vocal), *angika* (physical), *sattvika* (psychological) and *arharya* (decorative) along with the rhythmic choreography consequent of the percussion sounds. These aspects harmonise with the rhythms and moods produced by the musical structure and the rhythms of the action, both dramatic and actor-centred, abide by the tempo produced by the Nambiyars - members of the Ambalavasi community in Kerala. The symbiosis of musical mode and dramatic form is consequently more prevalent than Western theatre or other Asian dramatic genres and its formalisation, made distinct in the *Natyasastra*, proved the critical nature and placement of music. In *Music and Musical Thought in Early India*, Lewis Rowell provides five reasons for this indivisible braiding. The *Natyasastra* and existing body of dramatic theory and criticism provides detailed information of musical systems and its use in performance more than any other ancient culture. Furthermore, the demand for incidental music to be produced spontaneously during a performance led to a tradition of improvisation evident in Indian music today. Thirdly, the components of dramatic theory such as plot, action and formal structure have developed into models for musical structure. Next, like most Asian performance traditions, ritual ceremonies preceding the rise of the theatre tradition demanded the pairing of music and dance. Lastly, the repertoire of emotional states and expressive styles found in Sanskrit theatre consequently set the emotional tone for the expressive range of later Indian music and laid the foundation for the system of musical values (Rowell 95-6). Music, both vocal and instrumental, with *tala* as its structuring principle, was an indispensable element of Sanskrit theatre and songs remained an integral part of the Indian stage for through them dramatic themes and grand conflicts can be expressed and reconciled (Lal 281).

The vocal delivery of text and its 'musicality' are vital aspects of a *Kutiyattam* performance. Tonal variations express emotions in addition to strict *hastas* or gestures – a traditional rendering of the Vedas. Verse is delivered in musical modes suited to respective sentiments (Lal 228). Each specific emotional state is thus rendered by a composition of distinct melodic phrases, rhythmic patterns, appropriate poses, movements, gestures, facial expressions, styles of makeup, and costume colours (Rowell 105). In the performative hybridity that is *Desdemona*, the transmission of *rasa* was distinctly an absent dramaturgical concern. *Kutiyattam* was extracted as essentialised surface-form with *abhinaya* fractured and incomplete. Madhu, as earlier mentioned, lacked the significant decorative qualities that are

compelling signifiers of character-types and moral positionings.[9] Othello was reduced to donning a gauze costume and what resembled a neck guard for a dog, with it being meant to replicate the *chutti* employed in *Kutiyattam* and *Kathakali*. While Madhu struggled to retain the coherence of the remaining aspects – the vocal, physical and psychological – the rhythms and tonal qualities of a music of the 'Other' further disrupted the necessity for harmony. Rhythm, integral to its form, was simulated and *rasa* was 'made strange.'

The discomforting coupling of performance and musical form is best exemplified in Madhu's solo acts on stage accompanied by instrumentation from Jang's percussions. In Scene 2 [00:08:30], a young Othello emerges and his performance tradition is introduced in a fairly extended sequence. He reveals that he has killed his wife and that it was not a dream. He further explains how his father's name was Othello and so was his father's father. The scene ends with his revelation that he longs for an heir who would also be named Othello and views Desdemona as only a sex slave to accomplish this decree. Madhu's controlled, deliberate and precise movements, poise, and affixed stances, and the characteristic *mudras* of the *Kutiyattam* tradition were accompanied by the galloping sounds of the *changgu*. The rhythms performed were uncharacteristic of either Korean *changdan* cycles or *tala* patterns. More importantly, it was heard dis-synchronous from the rhythms of Madhu's movements. One can further consider how *tala* is the most significant musical aspect in Sanskrit theatre according to the *Natyasastra*. The rhythms structure the movements of the performers and simultaneously feed from the rhythms their bodies produce. In addition to this role and that of setting the 'mood' of the performance, rhythm in *Kutiyattam*, produced by the *mizhavu*, depicts different situations. In the presentation of a Brahmin setting out on a journey, for example, a particular rhythmic pattern called the *vattathil nadakkuka* is used. That which was heard and seen in *Desdemona*, the visual and acoustic texts, seemed as two lines of action that had no symbiosis or harmony essential to and required in *Kutiyattam*. Rhythms had become de-ritualised, stripped of their cultural performative functions, and became little more than surface-rhythm to set the tempo and pace of the performance event.

This sonic fissure could also be heard in the sounds (*vacika abhinaya*) of Madhu's chants – pitch, timbre, and tempo – sung in counterpoint to the colour and rhythm of the

[9] In *Kutiyattam*, the painted colour of a character's face, as well as the costume adorned, are indicative of their status and beings. For example, *Pacha* (green) is used to depict characters of nobility, *Kari* (black) is painted on the faces of she-demons, *Kathi* (or knife) is used to indicate villainous characters and a coloured *Thadi* (beard) is used to portray the monkey god Hanuman (white beard), or evil characters (red beard) and hunters (black beard). See Manohar Laxman Varadpande, *History of Indian Theatre*, 325. Costumes also symbolise the nature of the character. They are *Pacha* (noble characters), *Kathi* (valorous yet vicious), *Pazhukka* (noble and heroic), *Thadi* (monkey characters), *Minukku* (women and simple characters) and *Kari* (Demons and demonesses). See the video encyclopedia developed by Invis Multimedia and UNESCO for video examples of the vestimentary codes in *Kutiyattam* < http://www.indiavideo.org/kerala/arts/performing-art forms/kutiyattam/>.

chang'gu. Scene 6 [00:34:55; 00:35:37] opens with Othello's existential lament about the ontological nature of joy, sorry and anger. This deliberation is broken with Othello's sudden realisation of the shadows of his past that haunt him. The galloping rhythms of the *chang'gu*, when heard, seemed abrupt and arrhythmic when compared to the slow, unhurried drone-like flow of Madhu's chants. Here, the rhythm served only to build dramatic tension. Characteristically, a character's complex emotional and psychological temperament is not just expressed by the speed of his singing but rather the tonal variations expressed as a complex system of *raga*. Performers of *Kutiyattam* employ a stylised method using tonal variations to communicate the emotional depth of the text as well and it is a tradition rooted in the rendering of the Vedas by the Nambudiri Brahmans to develop dramatic articulation (Lal 229). The melismas and glissandos, characteristic of *Kutiyattam* singing, added to the subtle microtones and vocal embellishments unique to the singer (Madhu Margi), created a dissonance in their encounters with the tonal colour of the Korean hourglass drum.

Desdemona's soundscape was thus a sonic exposition to the impossibility of an acoustic interculturalism reflected in musical harmonies and/or rhythm. The sounds performed the negation of Asian identities – as that which is not. In a search for a new theatrical language to speak of Asias by the integration of distinct performance genres erased of context, sign-text and cultural-text, *Desdemona* ironically thrusted Asia into a collective hybridity of fragmented selves that is wholly other and wholly unknowable. The search for a common musical structure – the interlacing effects of rhythm – that would transcend any cultural form and scaffold the dramatic action resulted in an acoustic essentialism, an essentialism the performance sought to escape from.

Puncture and Rupture: The Sounds of Silence

The dynamic rupture in the sound events, and the consequent fracture of acoustic meaning, existed not only between sound types and rhythms, of what was heard but also in the interplay with what was not heard. In Scene 10 [00:43:45], a *p'ansori* song, a song of the dead, was sung as Jang ascended the stage and performed beside Desdemona. While he sang of Desdemona's encounter with her dead mother in a dream, Korean installation artist Park Hwa Yong created a parallel video text of a hypochondriac eating empty capsules. Sociologist Low Kee Hong, who performs as one of the many zeros, punctured the narrative of Desdemona's conversation with an email conversation written onstage to Mona, a fictional modern-day doppelganger whose name is anagrammatic of her counterpart Desdemona. The conflicting textualities on stage – both visual and acoustic – subverted the performative moment with the threat of rupture. The auditory experience of a Korean musical folk tradition became incessantly disrupted by the

conflicting signifiers of modernity and antiquity, mediated realities and liveness, silence and tradition, performance syntax and acoustic semantics.

P'ansori is perhaps the apt genre of Korean folk music (송악, *song'ak*) to perform Desdemona's forlorn condition for it is a style that is used commonly to express sorrow and woe. The experience of a *p'ansori* performance is one of catharsis and tears because of the tales of affliction and sadness that are often related (Willoughby 20). As Korean scholar Marshall Pihl observes, "the suffering and lamentations of [the *p'ansori* performer's] characters are frequently less in service of the plot than of the audience's need for catharsis [...] *P'ansori* elicit[s] sympathy through suffering: it gives its audience a means to endure sorrow" (5-6). This essence of *P'ansori* was distinctly absent in *Desdemona*.[10] There was neither narrative communication nor emotional connection with the spectator-listener.[11]

Playing on a variation of the traditional melodic mode (*cho*) of *kyemyonjo*, a mode used to depict sadness and mournfulness, and one whose musical character is marked by three pillar tones consisting of a central tone, cadences and downward sliding appoggiaturas of indefinite pitches,[12] Jang's vocal tremolos and distinctive harsh timbres[13] created a soundscape of death and re-birth, mŏt and mat, yin and yang.[14] Hitting the *buk* to the rhythmic cycles of the *chinyang changdan*, which is the slowest of all rhythmic cycles with an approximate 30 beats per dotted quaver, consisting of 24 beats which are further subdivided into four divisions called *kak*,[15] Jang sought to materialise, acoustically, an alter-realm of the after-life. This performance of a folk tradition of over 100 years was consistently counterpointed with the guttural silence of Desdemona who sat beside Jang almost allowing audiences who recognised this dramatic tradition to believe she would be the *sorikkun* (소리꾼, singer). Her lips moved, at times, in synchrony to the song of death but at most others morphed into revolting contortions

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[10] In a reading of this paper delivered at the National University of Singapore on January 9 2009, I had asked a Korean theatre scholar, Hwang Hwa Young, if the *p'ansori* performed in *Desdemona* elicited the same response and reaction as an actual *p'ansori* performance. She replied that her experience of *p'ansori*, as it is with many Koreans who are familiar with the form, stirs intense emotions within the listener. She did not experience this in *Desdemona* and was baffled by the adaptation.

[11] Listen to Track 7 on *Traditional Music from Korea* (Arc Music, EUCD 1561) for an example of a *P'ansori* performance.

[12] Song Bang-Song, *Korean Music: Historical and Other Aspects*, 256 for more details.

[13] In *p'ansori* singing, vocal qualities of singers are identified as rough, clear, quivering, or hard.

[14] In Chinese thought, the origin of the universe was realised through the two universal spirits of yin and yang. This principal is prevalent in Chinese music as well and has unmistakably been appropriated by Korean *a'ak* (아악). This is unsurprising considering her long political history of tributary, vassalage and conquest relations with China. It follows then that the Korean aesthetic principles of mŏt and mat are adapted notions of yin and yang applied to art and culture. See Hwang Byong-ki, "Aesthetic Characteristics of Korean Music and Theory and Practice," *Asian Music* 9:2 (1978): 29-40 for further explanations.

[15] One *kak* consists of six beats and the fifth and sixth beat of each *kak* is emphasised with the strongest accent placed on the seventeenth beat. There are seven rhythmic cycles in any p'ansori performance – *chinyang*, *chungmori*, *chungjungmori*, *chajinmori*, *hwimori*, *ommori* and *otchungmori*. See Song Bang-Song, *Korean Music: Historical and Other Aspects*, 252-3. See also Chan E. Park, *Voices from the Straw Mat: Toward an Ethnography of Korean Story Telling*, 54.

and movements of chewing and consumption. At times it seemed she desired to break the silence with emotional mutterings but was prohibited by her physicality, locked in liminality between the spoken and unspoken. Park's video texts of pill consumption and magnified lips that subsequently got smeared with layers of lipstick punctured the performance of an Asian tradition not merely with its corporeal unsightliness but the imagined vocal expressions implied by a visual silence. The email sequence of performance artists interrogating the ontological purpose of the performance and interculturalism itself, projected onto the second screen, incised the competing performativities composed by the song and the dramatic action.

In the chapter entitled "A Phenomenology of Voice," Ihde, expanding on Merleau-Ponty's beliefs of the "voices of silence" and of "singing the world," declares that all things of the world have voices. Even silences speak for the empty spaces and hollowness do reverberate with sound waves that are reflected on surfaces. Individual things contain voices even though they may be silent for the moment: "the rock struck, sounds in a voice; the footstep in the sand speaks muffled sound" (*Listening and Voice* 190). Heard as a phenomenological event, this surreal scene of dreaming and the dead reverberated with complex polyphonies of silent voices violently juxtaposing traditional sounds. The simultaneous video interjections trigger audial manifestations – resonances and vocal intonations – in the spectator's imagination akin to the act of silent reading. Desdemona's distorted lip movements and masticating actions equally evoke an imaginative polyphony that is as real as the sounds of Jang's chants and resonant drumming. The extended email conversation likewise produces an auditory and oratory process of silent reading – one reads and 'gives voice' to the words as one listens to them in one's mind. The phonologies, accents, articulations, and intonations created a convoluted cacophony that performed a scission of the intercultural process through an auditory medium: of listening between song and silence.

To return to an ethnomusicological framework of analysis, the performance of tradition was, in the *p'ansori* adaptation, removed from its contextual origins with singer and drummer embodied as one. While Jang's choice of using the *chinyang changdan*, consisting of 6 slow beats that forms the four-phrase lyrical line and is generally used to engender a more doleful and peaceful atmosphere,[16] the cycles of the *p'ansori* practice with a procession to other rhythmic sections is audibly absent and erased for dramaturgical reasons. A tradition of hours of story-telling reduced to a four-minute sequence and the erasure of the role of the audience as a medium of response and reaction for the *sorrikun*, characteristic to the tradition, testify further to the production's introduction of a culture for a self-same purpose of functional virtuosity. The *p'ansori* tradition, responding to the call for reinvention, became incompletely

[16] See Chan E. Park, *Voices from the Straw Mat: Toward an Ethnography of Korean Story Telling*, 54 for a concise table of rhythmic cycles used in *p'ansori*.

represented, consistently eroded and erased with an interactive incision of the visual and acoustic. The result was a staging of abjection, a sequence of discordance and dissonance that engendered a zero of reception and an absence of understanding.

Jang's hesitance about the efficacy and intention of the music in *Desdemona* is revealed in the programme notes.

> I read the script over and over for hours. My research for suitable music began and ended. The result was a disaster. Nothing seemed to be in place [...] *Even today I do not know how the music will turn out.* However, there is one thing for sure. The flexibility of leather and the sharpness of metal will make the first melody. The second will be the moderation of court music and the richness of folk music (Singapore Programme, own italics).

The lack of conviction revealed in Jang's programme write-up and the highly improvisational quality of the sounds and rhythms used in *Desdemona* run contrary to the performance traditions of both *Kutiyattam*, Korean *a'ak* (아악) and *p'ansori* which emphasise form, structure, cyclicity, symbolism and ritualism. Jang's confidence in the 'flexibility of leather' and the translatability of the 'sharpness of metal' discloses an attitude of acoustic universalism where leather and metallic timbres can transcend cultures.[17] While a casual hearing may yield a response that concurs with Jang's modern views of sound and instrumentation, a deep listening reverberates with a different exposition.

Cultural Acoustics: Tradition and Primitivism

The staging of absence and abjection – of tradition and cultural identities – was also evidenced in Maya Krishna Rao's performance of an Other-Othello. In Scene 1 [00:05:05], Rao performs an old man who is subsequently transformed into a beautiful young woman. While the programme notes problematise the identity of Rao's character by a series of rhetorical questions ("Is he Old Othello, Othello's father or a symbol of the historical legacy of the kingdom of Othello? Who is the beautiful young woman? Is she Othello's mother? Is she a symbol of the youth and hope that he has lost"), the narrative function of this sequence is unclear and the purpose of her presence indeterminate. Rao's character-identity remains ambiguous; it shifts consistently and abruptly. In addition, Rao is introduced, in the programme notes, as a performer of *Kathakali* but oftentimes her stage actions – gestural and vocal – consistently demeaned the stylised grace and sophistication of a genre that was birthed from *Kutiyattam* making not only her character inexplicable but her performance style as well.

[17] The debate of a musical or acoustic universalism will be considered in Chapter 5.

The decomposition of cultural representation and erosion of cultural signification were achieved not merely visually but audially as well. Jang's percussion instruments replaced the ensemble of drums used in *Kathakali*. These include the main instrument *chenda*, which is a cylindrical drum that produces high tones, a *sudha maddalam*, another cylindrical drum hung from the waist and played to produce a lower tonal quality, and the *edakka*, an hourglass drum.[18] Jang's korean *ching* marked the larger temporal cycles in these *Kathakali* sequences (if one could consider that which was staged *Kathakali*) while the *kkwaenggwari* played to Rao's indistinct and unsightly actions of lice-picking. As the metallic clangs of the *kkwaenggwari* increased in intensity and tempo, Rao was seen rising from a seated position and in a sudden fit growled while assuming a *Kathakali* stance in a strangely anti-conventional fashion. The hard plucks of the *ajaeng* and subsequent pulls of the bow signalled the transformation of Rao from old man to beautiful young woman. Accompanying the atonal jars of the screeching *ajaeng*, Rao marked the metamorphosis gesturally by shrieking and pulling at her hair in a disturbing display of primitivism.

One can certainly remark how the striking of the *ching* parallels the *ponnani*'s (the lead singer-narrator in *Kathakali*) marking of time cycles on the *chengila* in the Kathakali tradition, or the resemblance of the *chang'gu* to the *edakka* and the *buk* to the *maddalam*. The musical function and rhythmic cycles of both musics seem synonymous thereby inadvertently exemplifying Western ethnomusicologists' aspirations to expose 'universal structures' in world musics.[19] Yet their use on the intercultural stage was fragmented, dislocated from their ritual contexts and utilised only for functional effect allowing such synonymous 'alternation' of musical form and structure to be effected. Of greater fascination were the vulgate sounds of shrieks and growls that confounded a listener as it abraded the known tradition of polished songs meant to narrate the action. This aurally alienating sequence recurs in Scene 6 where the old man is transformed into a glorious warrior [00:30:20]. The old man's surreal transmutation was marked by the atonal screeches and plucks from the *ajaeng* and the rapid pulsating strikes on the *ching* that increased in tempo. The sequence ended with the glorious

[18] In a Kathakali performance, the *chenda* brings out the *tandava* or vigorousness, and the *maddalam* evokes *lasya* or gentleness. The *ponnani* (lead singer) marks the time on the *chengila* (bronze gong) with a stick, and the *sankiti*, while repeating the song's lines, does the same with the cymbals. The *chenda* is the main instrument and it is cylindrical in shape with one end having tightly fastened hide to create high tones. The *sudha maddalam*, added later, is also cylindrical and is hung from the waist and played on both sides with palms. However this *maddalam* is coated with black gum mixed with rice to give a unique tonal quality. The *etakka*, an hourglass drum, is also used and it is played with a stick in the right hand and is tonally varied by manipulating the wooden frame with the left hand. See Ananda Lal, *The Oxford Companion to Indian Theatre*, 205.

[19] Bruno Nettl explains lucidly what is a commonly known dilemma in ethnomusicological studies when he notes how the field seeks to rationalise basic unities of mankind as exhibited in music and musical behaviour and its antinomy of the infinite variety of musical phenomena found in the world. See "Definitions, Directions and Problems" in Elizabeth May, ed. *Musics of Many Cultures: An Introduction* 2.

warrior's encounter with the god of fire demanding the keys to the kingdom. The rage heard in Rao's voice, accompanied by the rhythmic force of the *buk*, evoked a primitivism encountered in and produced by the body.

Akoumenologically, these sounds embody a primalcy and an oral primitivism that precede tradition and cultural identity. Ihde, in considering the signifying possibilities of the voice, distinguishes between language-as-word, often understood as linguistic-language, and language-as-signification (*Listening and Voice* 148). The voice is able to produce both kinds of 'languages' for it can be regarded as language-as-signification even though it produces language-as-word. Beyond the linguistic signifiers that are generated by the vocal mechanisms, the labiality of the lips, and the placements of the tongue, what is heard *as voice* is a 'language' for it can signify and be perceived as meaning-acts. With the erasure of the elaborate vestimentary and cosmetic texts that demarcate character types in *Kathakali*, and the dilution of highly codified and meaning-filled gestural movements, the vulgate sounds – as voice – performed a 'universal' sonic quality that is pre-linguistic – sonic expressions that precede all culturally organised sounds. This is perhaps the new language of interculturalism amidst the debates of cultural appropriation – an interculturalism located in the primal 'grunt'? The sounds transpire as pre-linguistic and pre-symbolic. They are consequently received, phenomenologically, as experiences that are first comprehended in and by the body. One reacts instinctually and acts emotionally in accordance with or as contradiction to the materiality of the sound. Ironically, in this heavily stylised and codified performance, Rao's bellows and cries were acts least demanding on the audience's competence for in the timbre, resonance, texture and density they evoked a sense of *communitas* that transcended cultures and cultural boundaries. It was a register of affect produced by the universal body expressed as a sonic corporeality.

Employing a phenomenological framework, Kate Callaghan observes how the voice is always associated with the body either as the medium by which sound is produced or that which sound is heard. "To hear is to connect with our 'bodily position'" (Callaghan para. 5). Sound is thus written on the body (ibid.). Rao's grunts and growls inscribe the body as primal Other. The audience listens with a microperception – "sensory, fundamental, and reflexively referring to bodily position" (Ihde, *Postphenomenology* 75-6). Experienced as cultural signifier, or heard as macroperception – a culturally laden listening (ibid 76), Rao's primordial vocal articulations serve only to reinforce early Orientalist views of Asia as primitive-other, and elicit quite literally the question, "can the subaltern speak?"[20] It does little more than to re-present

[20] This is the title of an essay by Gayatri Spivak. See *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, 271-313.

an "essentialist Asian identity burdened by a primordial ethnicity" (Sharma 411).[21] The voice becomes the site at which, "in the distinction between the cry and the song, the human and the inhuman are differentiated in a state of perennial irresolution (Engh 134).[22]

While such interpretations, stemming from an awareness of the ethnomusicological properties and an akoumenological experience of the soundscapes created, may be incidental and subjective, or subject to one's knowledge of the conventions of ethnic music and dance involved in the production, these possibilities of a deep listening as one of the many approaches to a discursive analysis of *Desdemona* reveal the ways in which the performance, as materialisation of concepts and conceptions, counter-perform Ong's desire to strategically represent a New Asia. Paul Zumthor notes that in any oral performance, there is a dimension of sociocorporeality. The 'work' that is being performed is not the 'text' per se. It is the performer's body as well as the listeners' body that distinguishes a 'work' from a 'text' that is being performed, for every act of speaking and listening is an existential moment that affirms the selfhood of the speaker, the selfhood of the listener, and the culture than conjoins them (Zumthor 60-3). Rao's existential moment affirms an indeterminate self that is neither traditional nor contemporary but primordial. The cultural dislocation sustains a condition of absolute alterity located in and of itself and effected through a mechanical alienation from its own traditional identity. The highly performative moment was, furthermore, an alienation of its own Asian audience from Asian traditional forms and the cultures they represent (Yong, "Intercultural Performative" 266). In the attempt to "bring another perspective and forge a different relationship to intercultural performance" (Ong, "Encounters" 126) *Desdemona* performed alter(ed) Asias. The Asia(s) of *Desdemona* was unrecognisable, incomprehensible, and impermeable. While Ong's previous work *Lear* was, in one unflattering article, called a "Frankenstein of instant Asia,"[23] *The Straits Times*[24] reviewer Ong Sor Fern cuttingly wrote of *Desdemona* as "a wan corpse drained of all signs of life" ("Moaning Desdemona"). The decontextualised, deritualised, and dehistoricised performance forms coalescing in a spectacle of foreignness failed to evoke the richness of the cultures these art forms personify but demonstrated instead a primitivism by locating itself in and yet against modernity.

In many ways, Rao's primal acts and uttered sounds enact an Orientalist tradition of European modernism. Modernism, with its characteristic nostalgia and yearning for the

[21] Sharma uses this phrase here in a discussion on Asian cultural practices today and the ways in which they contest notions of race and identity. See Sanjay Sharma, "The Sounds of Alterity" in *The Auditory Culture Reader*, 409-418.

[22] Although Barbara Engh writes here of the effect of the Sirens on Odysseus, the phrase encapsulates the enigmatic aporia that is the voice in its indeterminate positions of crying and singing. See "Adorno and the Sirens," *Embodied Voices: Representing Female Vocality in Western Culture*, 120-138.

[23] See Alvin Tan, "A Necessary Practice," *9 Lives: 10 Years of Singapore Theatre*, 269-270.

[24] *The Straits Times* is Singapore's main English-Language broadsheet.

premodern and primordial, saw the Orient as a source of such pure 'uncorrupted' culture. The Orient was viewed as an ur-culture of the pre-expressive and in many ways less contaminated by the corruptions of modernity. Ironically, while Ong desired to resist such exoticisations of the East and stage an anti-Orientalist representation of Asia, these sequences of primitivism suggest an inevitable subscription to such attitudes. Rao's performative acts reveal an apparent disavowal of the contemporary for a lost past reconstituted as a future performative.[25]

"I Desire A Conversation··· A Conversation": The Intercultural Voice

Desdemona is a performance at the interstices, located in the rifts between cultural tectonics. The staging of these gaps in negotiation creates a space of aporia where the intercultural dialogue takes place. Intercultural performances, a priori, necessarily and always involve a conversation of performative, cultural, and linguistic signifiers. In an attempt to place value on the on-going exchanges between traditions and forms, and valuing the process of devising interculturalism rather than the product, Ong created a series of self-reflexive sequences to interrogate the possibilities and problems of intercultural practice.

The fractured conversations and hollow communication are exemplified in Scene 5 [00:28:00] where Desdemona, in a mood of reflective isolation, expresses her desire to have a conversation: "I desire a conversation, a conversation..." While it may seem she could have been attempting to make an emotional connection with Othello since the lines that come before are addressed to him, these autoreflexive lines are specifically directed to the audience as Desdemona stares intently at them. In a performance that was rife with absent responses, isolated images, the lack of interaction between different performers on the stage, monologues, and one-way conversations that receive no reply (such as Park's email to Mona about the rehearsal process of *Desdemona* and the efficacy of intercultural approaches), the lines of isolation reveal the political and socio-cultural mechanics that underlie the practice of interculturalism: the broken conversations, silences, and impossible translations of cultural, linguistic and performative languages reside in any performance of the intercultural. As intercultural product, this pluricity of languages often becomes subsumed by a dominant voice and all Other(s) become silenced in/as translation. Translation is thus, inevitably, an act of appropriation, a linguistic and cultural colonisation that reifies the dominant discourse and silences the Other while transforming his tongue. Likewise any attempt to represent or speak of a concept of Asia is already subjected to an act of appropriation and essentialism effected through an act of speaking *for* and speaking *as*.

[25] I thank Prof. Brian Singleton for this idea.

Ong thus asks, "Can we have a conversation when we have different histories, different memories and different languages?" (Director's Notes, Singapore Programme). *Desdemona*'s disjunctures of form and style, with performers speaking their native tongue, and the pastiche of fragmented cultural traditions, languages and sounds are Ong's response to performing the plurality that is Asia, and their singularity. As Ong admits, working interculturally raises the fact that translation is a central part of the work and that it is always difficult to find the right choice because one is always preferencing something over another ("Thoughts on Translation" 190). *Desdemona* is a response that seeks to resist the appropriative and colonising tendencies always already located in any act of translation. Yet the intentions fail when confronted with the ontological nature of theatre and performance.

Scene 11 best exemplifies Ong's reification of the futility of, and resistance to, translation; the inexplicable conversations and broken dialogues [00:48:33]. Desdemona sat on the stage as she watched Ngui manipulate paper puppets of Margi dressed and made-up in the vestimentary and cosmetic elaborations of *Kutiyattam*. An extreme close-up of Margi's portrait, positioned on the visualiser, was slowly 'deconstructed' as Ngui placed coloured cardboard overlays of what seemed like epidermal surfaces on the image in perhaps an attempt to make salient an argument about the constructed-ness of tradition and by extension Asian culture. This 'puppet-play' was accompanied by voiceovers of interviews between Ngui and various cast members about their life histories and experiences of practising their respective performance traditions. The audience *hears* the voice of Margi speaking in Malayalam[26] whose contents of the monologue are never translated. He then switches code and relates to Ngui, in English, his difficult experiences of learning *Kutiyattam* and the futility of these efforts [00:49:02]. The South-Indian inflection, retroflexive accent and monophthong evoke, upon encounter, a sense of Otherness: as cultural other embodied in the articulating voice despite the aurally recognizable language that is spoken. In his voice, the trace of Malayalam remains and cannot be erased. The ethnic accented voice speaking a language foreignly adopted underscores the isolated and untranslatable positions of cultures in interaction. This aural alterity continues when the audience hears an aged voice of U Zaw Min, recounting, in Myanmarese, the "crosses of [his] life" and his father's influence on his passion for dance [00:50:06]. The contents of U's monologue are translated only as fragments interposed. U's desire to tell his story is consistently undercut by the translator's seeming inability to relate all that he is recounting. This is evidenced by U's long narrative verses as opposed to the translator's abrupt summaries that are positioned as interjections in the recount. In addition, her feminine, young and delicate voice serves as counterpoint to U's rough and mellow timbre.

[26] Malayalam is the regional language of Kerala, South India. It is also the language used in the performance of *Kutiyattam* and *Kathakali*.

The monologue in translation accentuates the complexities and complications of translation. Translation is always abbreviated and incomplete. It enacts censorship and omission. In *Desdemona*, translation is an act of cultural erasure and not merely a linguistic one.

The scene ends with Park and Ngui bantering in English about the futility of translation, and the video-text of the email conversation between Low to Mona continues on the screens above [00:52:10]. The simultaneous lines of action, occurring at various locations on the stage and at intervening junctures create, multiple planes that require decoding and translation. The email conversation adds another element of dissonance because a cosmopolitan spectator who recognises, presumably, English would read the video text in his/her mind and in so doing engenders yet another acoustic text whose silent sounds and consequent meanings evoked through ethnic intonations and accents compete with what is heard in the external environment (in this case the theatre space and the dramatic event). The attempts at an aural comprehension and cohesion are further juxtaposed against video images of a hand writing a script in Malayalam and subsequently Hindi. This pastiche further punctures the linearity and coherence of the multiple narratives invoked by the voices and images. The spectator is thus assaulted relentlessly with dissonance and excess, and is positioned in a continual state of perplexity in the attempt to find a common 'language' of understanding amidst these competing cultural and linguistic voices. The sounds, experienced phenomenologically, perform the problematic nature of cultures in/at (an) inter-change. The untranslatabilities of cultural and performance languages are heard more than they are seen.

The docu-performative bricolage, a genre that Ong devised to make indistinct the boundaries between fiction and reality, perform the cacophony that is interculturalism while illustrating evidently the impossibilities of translation. In the voiceover conversation between Park and Ngui, Park states explicitly the problems of translation: "I don't believe in translation actually. It could help but, at the same time, it could really misguide you" [00:52:20]. As metatext, the sequence addresses overtly the inescapable condition of appropriation and essentialism which *Desdemona* attempts to prevaricate. It is consumed by that which it struggles to be free of as the performance, like all performances, is still subjected to the circles of pleasure demanded by the spectator – a desire for comprehension and conception, and a pleasure of concordance amidst the discordance. Jauss terms this need and necessity of the pleasure sought in aesthetic experience as *aesthesis*.[27] While this scene powerfully echoes issues of cultural plurality and (cultural and linguistic) imperialism involved in translations, subtitles were still essential to decode the untranslatable and make understood the babel. The need to have the audience comprehend the impossibilities of complete understanding required

[27] See Hans Robert Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, 67.

an act of invalidating and consuming its own action and intent by effecting a universal 'voice' of subtitling – in English.

This thesis suggests, however, that the site of translation and intercultural exchange is not located in any one universal voice bespeaking a common language (often regarded as the language of the West, or the language of the colonizer) but in what Roland Barthes terms the grain of the voice.[28] The grain is the site of the encounter between a language and a voice – it comes before language in the utterance of sound. It is an "individual thrill" (Barthes, "Grain" 181). The grain is not merely the timbre but the *signifiance* it opens in the friction between music and the particular language of utterance (ibid 185). The voice as *the* medium of the intercultural is evidenced in a significant scene about the (im)possibilities of bilingualism and translation. After Desdemona's monologue of a desire for a conversation, the video screens reveal Maya Rao, seated in an apartment, singing Dean Martin's classic tune "Buttercup" [00: 28:43]. The audience then hears Ngui's voice in the video clip requesting that Rao switch to perform a Malayalam folk tune with which Rao complies. While this sequence remains extraneous to the fictional plot it establishes the voice as the instrument of the intercultural. It is in the voice where modernity encounters tradition; the voice is the site of the body in which translations can transpire. But it is a translation that is not linguistic as it is the grain where the acoustic encounter resides. While the modalities, rhythm, styles, and mood differ radically between the two songs performed by Rao, the voice is the constant site of transposition, exchange, interchange, and re-location. The grain is that which is unique and individual yet flexible and adaptive.

It is the voice in which the inter-cultural encounter takes place but it is also the site of cultural confrontation as witnessed in Scene 13 where Othello murders Desdemona yet again [00:58:20]. The scene begins with Desdemona reawakened by a Myanmarese marionette manipulated by U Zaw Min after her initial murder. The puppet gives life to Desdemona who then assumes its reins. Othello witnesses this mysterious resurrection and feels mocked by Desdemona. He is infuriated not only at her live-ness but his own inadequacies of killing her. She challenges him to kill her once again and taunts him by means of a puppet play. As Desdemona maneuvers the puppet she speaks in Singaporean-accented Cantonese to Othello accompanied by a reverberating hollow echo of an altercated chant. Othello flees offstage in the realization that Desdemona has become seemingly invincible and it is at this dramatic juncture, marked by the sudden sharp metallic sounding of the *ching* and *kwaenggwari*, that all characters come on stage in a frenzied dance. Othello returns and, in a combative stance, challenges Desdemona to a duel. This final confrontation enacts the impossibilities of cultural

[28] The concept of the grain has been expounded on in Chapter 1. See p 64.

translation and transposes the physical action, distinctly segregated by cultural and performance traditions, onto the oral/aural dimension. The tensions, contradictions and conflict become embodied in and as the tenor and timbre of Margi and Wong's voices. The confrontation becomes corporealised as sound and is heard rather than seen as exemplified in both their 'pugilistic' yells. The low register and authoritative density of Margi's howls signify the gravity with which he drowns Wong's shrill but light and wispy tones. The sequence moves into a dance between Othello and Desdemona that symbolically performs the duel while the sharp high-pitched sounds of a *t'aep yongso* (태평소), an oboe-like instrument with a double reed fit into a metal mouth piece that produces a distinctive piercing sound, are played regulated by the establishing rhythms of the *buk*. While it is evident that sound has been employed to substitute physical action in the dramatic conflict and second murder of Desdemona, one can argue hypothetically that the sounds are also metonymic of the cultural confrontations inherent in processing interculturalism. The voices in *Desdemona* thus resound with the tensions, dissensions and complications of untranslatable cultural and performance languages in interaction. They echo the pluricity and diversity that is Asia as a 'non-entity'.

Idhe expounds on the phenomenological experience of the relation between music and word, and music in word when heard. The foreign tongue, according to him, "is first a kind of music before it becomes a language; it is first pregnant with meaning before the meaning is delivered to me" (Ihde, *Listening and Voice* 157). In other words, the sounds of the language embody meaning with meaning here preceding that of the linguistic expression or inscription (what Ihde terms as language-as-word). It is the immediacy of the auditory encounter with the voice that embodies a "meaning-in-sound" (ibid. 150). It is in this space located between and in the speaker and listener that the inter-cultural resides for that which proceeds from the voice, as word, is already subject to the possibilities of translation. Kate Callaghan endorses such an understanding of meaning-in-sound and Barthes's reading of the grain when she notes how "the voice is 'pure indication,' pure meaning to mean, pure universal transcendence" (para. 9). The grain of the voice will carry sufficient meaning to the ear and there is something in the grain that conveys meaning between the signifier and signified (ibid.), or the *signifiance*.

The voice is perhaps the only 'universal' element of interculturalism and precedes even the fundamental structure of rhythm. Yet ironically it is also in the voice which absolute alterity is experienced for it approaches, as Callaghan propounds adapting concepts from Giorgio Agamben's writings in *Language and Death*, the condition of pure being. As such it is

difficult to listen to or for this space in the Other's voice since if to experience is to comprehend, then to comprehend the space of 'pure being' in a voice is to also experience its complete Otherness (para. 10). The intercultural voice approaches the condition of universality

for it is a quality of all cultural sounds. Yet it remains always already composed as Other in the experience of voice for 'pure meaning' remains inaccessible. It must not only be filtered through and by language but in the utterance echoes the dislocations of complete understanding.

The consequent sequence of video images displayed on the screens after Othello and Desdemona execute their final duel is a poignant reminder of the failure of translation and the impossibilities of speaking for the Other [01:02:29]. Seen above the physical action, the mediated images of dismembered body parts of a *yokthe pwe* marionette juxtapose extreme close-up images of an actor's lower facial features adorned with face painting to resemble the Myanmarese marionette. While the alternating images serve to ambiguate the boundaries between 'real' (the physical body) and 'unreal' (marionette replicas), bodily and artificial, these concurrent images of dismembered extremities reinforce the notions of fracture and fragmentation prevalent in the performance. The image of the (unreal) actor-puppet's mouth, alternating with those of the (real) marionette's, uttering silent words, gestures to the impossibilities of speech and translation. As the camera locked its position on the image of the gaping actor-puppet's mouth, subtitles, at the bottom of the screen, appeared as undecipherable pictograms and symbols. Beyond the epistemological impossibility of speaking for the Other, this sequence advances, by extension, the perception that Asia cannot be spoken of positively and remains as negative silence. The pictograms that run across the screen as the language of the mute human-puppet accentuate the symbolic qualities of Asia as signifier(s) without a signified(s). Any positive utterance of Asia(s) is continually erased and expunged.

"Nothing Will Come Of Nothing, Speak Again": The Gaping Mouth of Silence

As sequel to *Lear*, *Desdemona* continues Ong's philosophy that

> [n]o one culture should understand *Lear* in its entirety, no one culture appropriates another. Above all *Lear* would be performed in many different languages. Any culture would require translation to understand this production completely (*Lear*, Singapore Programme 2).

This non-understanding remains a trademark of Ong's works. *Desdemona* reflected that philosophy consistently by performing the fissures and contradictions between cultures and cultural traditions, and constantly mystifying the audience and upsetting their expectations in a process that called into question an Asian audience's own cultural, racial and political identity. It not merely deconstructed a concept of Asia (intentional or otherwise) but fragmented an Asian audience's sense of place and space. The intercultural process was thus

not merely the procession of cultures on stage but also the tensions created with/in the spectator. The spectacle of alienation and excess eroded commonly accepted monoliths of Asian representation.

The acoustic excess distinctly reflected these performative tensions and predicaments of intercultural engagement with the audience. In Scene 12, Othello confronts Desdemona in a climactic altercation and eventually kills her [00:52:44]. This act of physical violence was transposed onto the aural text corporealised by the conflicting tonalities and timbres, much in contrast to the visuality of the actors' restrained and stylised actions. The scene opened with the *ajaeng*'s characteristic rasping sounds, akin to the timbral quality of a cello but more grating, caused by the slow scraping of the bow on the silk strings. Desdemona sat on stage peeling away her latex 'skin' in a metaphorical act of re-birth and revival. The sounds of the *ajaeng* were interjected by Othello's dronal chant that was phrased as a protraction on a *swara* (musical note) distinctly different in tonal quality, pitch and rhythm from the prevailing refrain. As the tension between Othello and Desdemona rose, the sounds that are able to "evoke a feeling of pathos" transmuted into atonal screeching that juxtaposed the sounds of *Kutiyattam* chants and Desdemona's monotonous speech patterns. The performative moment created a tripartite sonic confrontation between the jarring sounds of the *ajaeng*, the gruff delivery of Madhu's chants in Malayalam, and Wong's clipped, Singaporean-accented English. This clash of languages, linguistic and musical, tonal and timbral, rhythmic and audial, consequently gestured metonymically to the dissonance and disjuncture of performing Asia and a seeming impossibility of self-definition.

The deafening silence of non-understanding and mis-understanding was revealed in the hesitant applause at the end of the show.[29] The performance confounded with a re-presentation of absent Asia. Asia (or Asias) was constantly erased in a spectacle of defamiliarisation and repulsiveness; the 'sublime' and the vulgar became treated as symbols of equal significance on this intercultural stage.[30] As Yong notes,

> [...] by choosing to pitch ancient and little-known forms like *Kutiyattam* against hyper-modern video installation, it stretched the distance between old conventions and new technologies of performance, repeatedly placing the audience – and their identification with and of Asia – in the gaps between them [...]" (Yong, "Intercultural Performative" 266).

Desdemona interrogated the (im)possibilities of an Asian interculturalism, and of Asia itself, by a performance at the "seams of juxtaposition and lines of disjunction" (ibid. 269). The gaps

[29] I refer here to the Singapore performance I saw on 3 June 2000.
[30] This phrase is adapted from James Clifford though used in an entirely different context. See James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art*, 129.

were not only perforations in the mise en scène but the silences and sonority of the soundscape – the acoustic reverberations, the cultural dissonance, rhythmic ruptures, and the audible silence of intervening pauses. In an interjecting video capture of dialogues between performance artists during rehearsals staged as part of Ong's docu-performative event, a script was seen written in *hangul* (Korean language) and a voiceover requested the author to translate the lines which read as, "I do not speak your language and you do not speak mine" [00:29:40]. This performative act of translation not just between languages but of inscription to enunciation, silence to sonority, ironises the impossibility of its own act. This impossibility is also the impossibility of the language as first heard then spoken – the modulations, inflections and accents of the speaking voice. The lines echo then the performance of failure: a failure of comprehension and translation – a translation of the linguistic, cultural, performative – and a failure of performing an Asian self-image.

What *Desdemona*'s performative failure excavates, as metatext, is, however, a socio-cultural and political reality. In an act of autoreflexive reversal, the performance's incomplete and incompliant 'showcase' of lesser Asia resonated with the prevailing consciousness in post-colonial discourses today such as those advocated by Rustom Bharucha: to speak of Asia as entity, politically or theatrically, is impossible.[31] As Bharucha observes

> [... Asia] was invented to provide Europe with a distinctive, almost heuristic, identity, facilitating a particular idea of cultural difference in which the people living in vastly different and heterogeneous cultural contexts outside of Europe could be homogenized and fixed. Most egregiously, Asia has served, time and again, as the Other of the West, the non-West, even by those Asia-skeptics attempting to deconstruct and de-essentialise its imagined unity ("Foreign Asia/Foreign Shakespeare" 4).

Any representation of Asia is always subjected to appropriation, alteration, and Othering. Asia cannot be spoken of for there is neither an 'authentic' nor homogeneous identity even unto itself as a polyglot of identities. Asia is absent and must remain so. Bharucha's ideas echo historian Naoki Sakai's deliberations on the perceived unitary nature of 'Asia'. In "You Asians: On the Historical Role of the West and Asia Binary," Sakai argues that "the name Asia originated outside Asia, and its heteronomous origin is indubitably inscribed in the concept of Asia, even if it can by no means be taken as a geographic or cartographic locality" (791). In fact, "it is impossible to talk about Asia positively. Only as a negative of the West can one possibly address oneself as an Asian. Therefore to talk about Asia is invariably to talk about the West" (Sakai 793).

[31] See Bharucha's "Foreign Asia/Foreign Shakespeare: Dissenting Notes on New Asian Interculturality, Postcoloniality, and Recolonization," *Theatre Journal* 56 (2004): 1–28.

Sakai's astute insights ring true when considered in the light of Ong's intercultural works. In a personal interview with Yong Li Lan, Ong states that these intercultural projects are reactions to the appropriations of Asian traditions by Western directors in a show that 'we Asians' can produce intercultural spectacles as well. Ong's works thus seek to escape the hegemonies of identifying Asia by emphasising its plurality and constantly interrogating the concept of Asia through fragmentation and juxtaposition. Yet such an escape from the binary is impossible for the performance of Asias reinforces the discursive binaries. 'Asia' seems engendered, for Ong, as a reactive strategy. Its conception is achieved by conceptualising that which is not-West (or Western intercultural practice). Ironically, as Sakai further critiques,

> the insistence on the propriety and native authenticity of *us Asians* would [...] reinforce the discriminatory and distinctive uniqueness of the West and prevent us from dismantling the colonial relationship that underlies the identities of both the West and Asia (801).

The 'foreignness' of an Asian cultural identity resounds with greater significance when we further consider how a performance, as ontologically a representation, is a reiteration of a fictional authenticity of itself in/as performance. Asia, in performance, is doubly fictionalised. To contextualise this concept in the language of sound performance, ethnomusicologist Laurent Aubert considers how "every alteration of music's role and context inevitably implies a structural and semantic displacement of its manifestations" (4). The sounds and music employed in any performance are always already adaptations. These metamorphoses are consequently inherent in the nature of a performance of any form. The search for cultural authenticity behind the veils of performance is elusive for there is only silence and absence. Authenticity is after all, as James Clifford notes, "relational [for] there can be no essence except as a political, cultural invention, a local tactic" (12).

While Ong's reactive Asia is still held hostage to the binaries that define it, the production seemingly accomplished that which had failed for in its confounding mise en scène and abstracted performance traditions, *Desdemona* performed Asia's impossibility of self-representation and its identity as impossible. It rejected the easy associations (and exoticisations) of 'Asia' and performed the problematics of definition(s). *Desdemona*'s counter-performative act, consequent of its failure as performance, effectively erased this imagined community and presented dislocations and fragments of foreign Asias, cultures that became theatrically deconstructed and erased. Through its soundscape, Desdemona performed precisely an alterity of Asianness "through the incommensurable untranslatable sounds – which give rise to the cultural dissonances able to withstand and eschew neo-orientalist regimes of power-knowledge" (Sharma 414).

The failure to provide coherence, cogency, and translation in the presentation of varied Asian performance traditions and the cultures represented demonstrates strongly the need to shatter existing monolithic and hegemonic perceptions of Asia. *Desdemona*'s 'success' in interrogating Asia as a socio-political construct extended to the spectators in Asia and their own cultural identities for it performed its own alienation. Yong encapsulates this best when she writes of how

> *Desdemona* failed to produce a sense of belonging to extreme and divided Asias for spectators split between their traditions and the present, separated from each other by gulfs between their cultures. Rather, *those conflicts staged the spectator as a non identity between poles that were either unfamiliar or estranging* [...] ("Fiction of the Intercultural" 537, own italics)

Desdemona's fictional success far exceeded its own expectations as it was achieved by a failure of communication and a failure of identification even for the 'Asian' spectator. The performance left one who could possibly claim an Asian heritage, as fictional as that concept may be, "dispossessed and alienated from both, with neither a position between to stitch them together nor an understanding of where to stand in relation to past, present, or other Asias" (ibid.). Identity positions were violently interrogated and erased. *Desdemona* could thus be said to reside in the site of negativity, of the untranslatable, and incomprehensible – the space of Zero/O. Zero/O is aporia where Asia is heard as silence.

In the condition of aporia, *Desdemona* becomes contained within the Zero/O she seeks to escape from in the opening scene. The intent of speaking about, or performing, the impossibilities of Asian representation is consistently subjected to the very action of its annulment. The impossibilities of inscribing Asia are at once subjected to the possibilities that engender the same impossibilities. In *Given Time.1, Counterfeit Money*, Derrida writes of possible and impossible aporias – inherent paradoxes that at once ascribe identity while negating its prospect. The economy of gift giving, as Derrida observes for example, contains an unspoken yet understood expectation of recompense. It contains an implicit demand that the genuine gift must reside outside of the conditions of giving and taking, and the reasons behind the exchange – an economics of exchange. There must be an instance of effraction – a breach or dislocation – in the cycle / circle of exchange (Derrida, *Given Time* 9). A gift cannot be a gift as it appears for it is negated and erased by any act that promises compensation or equivalence such as an act of reciprocation or an utterance of appreciation (counter-gift) in the economy of time (ibid. 12, 13).

> If there is a gift, the *given* of the gift (*that which* one gives, *that which* is given, the gift as given thing or as act of donation) must not come back to the giving (let us not already say to the subject, to the donor). It must not circulate, it

> must not be exchanged, it must not in any case be exhausted, as a gift, by the process of exchange, by the movement of circulation of the circle in the form of return to the point of departure (Derrida, *Given Time* 7).

The gift thus resides in the condition of being at once the impossibilities that give rise to its possibilities. It cannot "be gift as gift except by not being present as gift" (ibid. 14). In the same way, a performance of Asia, even of its impossibilities is always already located in the possibilities of representing Asia and can only be so. One is unable to not speak of Asia without having to first be conscious of the conditions of articulating it.

Following this analogy of gift-giving and exchange, cultural interaction on the stage is an economy where economics, as Derrida argues, implies the idea of reciprocation, of circulation, and of return (*Given Time* 6). The figure of the circle is the figure of economy and it stands at the centre of any economic exchange, cultural or monetary (ibid.). The circle, Zero/O is then an apt motif for the intercultural for it not only characterises the inescapable conditions of exchange and circulation but also signifies the inevitable cycle of re-presentation and mis-representation. Desdemona's attempts to shatter the constrictions of Zero/O fail for it encloses upon her an inescapable destiny of an identity tied to Othello's. As metonymy, Zero/O is Asia contained by its mathematical binary relation to the West whose numerical signifier '1' engenders its presence. Asia is therefore absent, vacant, and hollow only otherwise existent as a reactive strategy and reactionary concept to the West both as imaginary construction and geo-political simulacrum.

The rest then is, as Hamlet mutters moments before absence consumes him, silence. And Zero/O remains its gaping mouth.

Chapter 5

"If Music Be The Food Of Love": 'Fourth World' Universals in Ong Keng Sen's *Awaking*

"The Universal Language of Mankind": Sonic Universals, Performance Universals

In the opening pages of a stimulating explication on the state of world music today, ethnomusicologist Laurent Aubert asks, "if, as one hears, music is a universal language, of what music do we speak, wherein lies its universality and under which conditions does it emerge?"(xii). The plausibility of music's universality, its transcultural semantics, and humanist affections, has long been debated in the fields of sociomusicology and systematic musicology. Implicit in Henry Longfellow's infamous aphorism is the principle of music as a language that possesses syntactic structures, morphologies and corresponding semantic systems – an equivalent 'semiology' – that achieves collective effect.[1] Seemingly, the intended outcome of all musics is consequently an affective and emotional dimension employed by all societies and cultures for social and political expression.[2]

Aubert's inquiry however interrogates this episteme of universalism in sound and notes how in an aural encounter with a "music of the Other," a dilemma often encountered in ethnomusicology, universality is not about a transcendental signified or an affective communion but a comment about one's own music particularly when one fails to specify what music is being referred to (Aubert 7). The claim to an acoustic universalism is a predominant means by which Western musicologists and musicians seek to allay anxieties of difference through the location of a common 'language' that articulates divergent musicalities spoken through that which is familiar. The imaginative concept of a 'global sound' first began with European expansionism in the age of colonialism. With increased cultural contact, the music in spaces of Otherness was a remarkable fascination due to their qualities of 'primitiveness' (Radano and Bohlman 16). As Radano and Bohlman observe, a 'universal sound' remained a European conception, one where Europe remained centrally situated (ibid.). This common tongue is thus not only the language of Western modalities and heptatonic harmonies for notions of univocal hierarchies of musical value and authority are rooted in the essentialisms of post-Enlightenment Western aesthetic discourses and have influenced significantly musical

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[1] In *Quasi Una Fantasia*, Adorno expounds on the concept of music as a language claiming that it resembles a language as recurring ciphers do resemble lexical items in music and that, like language, music is a temporal sequence of articulated sounds. Yet "anyone who takes it literally will be seriously misled" for Adorno believes music creates no semiotic system – the medium of expression is the expression itself. Furthermore, music has a 'theological dimension' and is a language without intention. Music is that which is phenomenon but which gestures to something else; it has rules of musical grammar and structure but is more than a set of didactic systems. "It is by distancing itself from language that its resemblance to language finds its fulfillment (6). See *Quasi Una Fantasia* 1-6. For a more thorough explication on music as a language of signification, consult Chapter 2. Roger Scruton on the other hand believes that tonality is not a language and meaning in music is a tradition, "developing by echo and allusion" (467).

[2] The humanist philosophy of universal structures and principles in music facilitated by the discourse of ethnomusicology has been examined extensively in Chapter 2.

discourses of the twentieth century itself (Born and Hesmondhalgh 18). Radano and Bohlman postulate a more controversial thesis by claiming that

> [...] the modern comprehension of 'music' as such would not have come about without the emergence of a relational circumstance that positioned a European practice above and beyond the more authentic, yet ultimately lesser, forms of 'emerging' peoples. This European musical supremacy, in turn, would be reinforced by a new musical economy of public concert listening, guided by critics who provided determinations of meaning for an increasingly music-conscious bourgeoisie (16-17).

The new universalism of the 'World Music' genre commonly heard on commercial airwaves today is little more than a revivalism and re-production of the fascination with 'primitive,' Other sounds that can be fused and re-used to invigorate new 'global' sounds. As John Corbett explicates, in "Experimental Oriental: New Music and Other Others," the new universalism in modern and postmodern musics is the Cagean experimental avant-gardism. This paradigmatic shift from product to process, justified by a methodological scientism, is little more than reinvention through the appropriation of non-Western sound sources. The insistent hybridity (or what Born and Hesmondhalgh term a "will to hybridity") (19) of postmodern music styles testify to an implicit subscription of universality even when it seems to celebrate diversity. Such a universalistic episteme, Corbett explains, has been central to the socialization of composers from both East and West. It is rooted in musical discourses of modernity. The global art music network thus risks an 'aesthetic violence' through the tyrannies and closures of its universalizing discourses (Born and Hesmondhalgh 21).

Contrary to the belief that universality in sound, which has culminated in the sonic hybridities characteristic of the 'world music' genre, can free musics and music cultures from the "asymmetrical relations of representation and the seductions of the exoticisms, primitivisms, and Orientalisms that paralleled colonial and neo-colonial relations" (Born and Hesmondhalgh 19), the threat of hegemonic power structures are more ominous for they are disguised as the apparent relativism and pluralism of sound-exchange and 'experimentation'.

As hybridity, the disguised appropriation is trademark of interculturalism on the stage as well for such Orientalist importations first began as a genuine attempt at comprehending the performance philosophies of the alien Other. Expeditions of humanist ideals led to a quest for universal structures first beginning with Victor Turner's anthropological quest of establishing social drama as universals in myth, ritual and drama and Richard Schechner's consequent

developments in performance theory.[3] Asian performance practices and principles accordingly became adopted and adapted by practitioners such as Peter Brook and Ariane Mnouchkine among others already discussed in the prior chapters. Like the field of music studies, such notions of universality in theatre – where as Mnouchkine once infamously claimed "the theatre is Oriental"[4] – have been fiercely disputed by postcolonial theorists armed with Saidian principles who have indicted these practices as neo-imperialistic and cultural theft: non-Western sources appropriated for Western targets.

Universalism has been a contested claim in many of the performing arts and this chapter seeks to examine the intersections of musical and theatrical universals in the hopes of addressing the questions Aubert raises. Through a close reading of Singaporean director Ong Keng Sen's most recent intercultural project *Awaking*, this chapter would interrogate, more broadly, the designation of universals as love, life and music dictated in the performance while reflecting on the political implications of advocating such a musicultural strategy of universality. It will examine closely the aural-oral tableau constructed to perform a 'merging' of cultural interstices through a composition of new music as revised universal. By encouraging a phenomenological listening to this new hybrid soundscape, the chapter seeks to explicate further the (im)possibilities of an acoustic interculturalism, one that is perhaps a 'brave new world' of pastiche, playfulness, and heterotopic possibilities as opposed to the dialectical Oriental-Occidental paradigm. Through a consideration of the materiality of the voice and its producing body, the chapter will also examine racial-gendered identities as new performance universals. In listening to the voice, an intersubjective space is opened. It is a space that compels one to recognize the Other while confronting the Self:

> Listening to the voice inaugurates the relation to the Other: the voice by which we recognize others (like writing on an envelope) indicates to us their way of being, their joy or their pain, their condition; *it bears an image of their body* and, beyond, a whole psychology (as when we speak of a warm voice, a white voice, etc.). Sometimes an interlocutor's voice strikes us more than the content of his discourse, and we catch ourselves listening to the modulations and harmonics of that voice without hearing which it is saying to us. This dissociation is no doubt partly responsible for the feeling of strangeness (sometimes of antipathy) which each of us feels on hearing his own voice: reaching us after traversing the masses and cavities of our own anatomy, it

[3] The concept of ritual and Turner's theorizations of universals in performance will be discussed in the later sections of this chapter.

[4] See "The Theatre is Oriental," *The Intercultural Performance Reader*, 93-98. See also Chapter 2 for an explication on the ideas and works of Mnouchkine.

> affords us *a distorted image of ourselves*, as if were to glimpse our profile in a three-way mirror (Barthes, "Listening" 254-5, own italics).

As this chapter will establish, *Awaking* is a musical mise en abyme in which cultural identities, reflected through song, music and the voice, are in constant negotiation, established via an echolocation of the 'Self' in relation to the 'Other.'

Awaking engages explicitly with early modern notions of universalism reformulated as a postmodern performative. Staged as an attempt to "bring together Shakespeare's plays and Tang Xian Zu's classical tale made popular as Kunqu opera *The Peony Pavilion*," (Director's Notes, Singapore Programme) *Awaking* (Singapore Arts Festival, 13 & 14 June 2008) marks Ong's paradigmatic shift in dramatic strategies of (re)figuring the intercultural that is Other to Western modes. In Ong's earlier controversial works such as the Shakespeare-trilogy *Lear* (1997), *Desdemona* (2000) and *Search Hamlet* (2002), the intercultural involved an interplay of juxtaposed cultural spectacles framed by inversions of and re-visions to Shakespeare's text. *Awaking* however attempted to explore issues of inter-culture beyond a visual aesthetic and depart from ocular obsession to aural encounter. It thus treaded on the borders of theatrical and musical conventions for it featured the music and musicians as central performative devices of (re)presenting the intercultural.

In creating a 'universal' of performance, one that was intended to remark and contest Western appropriative 'universals,' Ong's "dramatic concert" (Ong, *Awaking* Post-show Dialogue) involved a collaboration between the "Musicians of The Globe," led by music director Philip Pickett, the "Singapore Chinese Orchestra" (SCO) under the direction of Maestro Tsung Yeh, and the "Northern Kunqu Opera Theatre" troupe from Beijing. The performative structure of a triadic interplay between Kunqu opera (昆曲), Chinese classical music and Elizabethan folk tunes from Shakespeare's plays became the hybrid composition that sought to explore "the differing yet connected philosophies of love, death, and the afterlife" (*Awaking*, Publicity Material). This tripartite negotiation of these metaphysical universals found expression in the triadic relation between the performance traditions selected. The humanist and 'universal' themes were thus embodied in the 'universal' language of music creating, in the space of performance, an imagined intercultural other-space of an 'after-life' – a 'Fourth World.' The term 'Fourth World' can be traced to minimalist composer and trumpeter Jon Hassell's entitling of 'world music' albums which he produced. In the two volumes, Hassell featured the exotic sounds of the East in fusion with those of contemporary Western music in an attempt to create

a genre that dissolved cultural boundaries.[5] The term, however, describes more significantly his compositional philosophy of minimalist fusion: a sonic topography of utopian interzones composed of electronic sounds and Asian-African rhythms and musics.

The arcadian soundscape of a 'Fourth World' in *Awaking* is located in the interstices of two cultures and three performance traditions. The shared belief of a universal cosmology engendered by the quality of music is distinctly revealed when Ong writes of how *Awaking* was an attempt to merge aesthetic and cultural parallels of West and East exemplified by the lives of Shakespeare and Tang Xian Zu (汤显祖), and their canonical works. Both playwrights lived in the 16th century and wrote great dramatic works that have transcended temporalities, and both wrote of tragic lovers and states of unrequited love. The star-crossed lives of Hamlet and Ophelia thus mirror that of Du Liniang (杜丽娘) and Liu Mengmei (柳梦梅) in *Mudan Ting* (牡丹亭) / *The Peony Pavilion*. Ong thus attempted to use music as the performative instrument to stage the universal and the cosmological; "Sad songs and happy songs of love became the pillars of quotes for us [...]" (Director's Notes, Singapore Programme). Because the production explored notions of the after-life and "metaphysical regenerative powers" (Director's Notes, Singapore Programme) evident in *The Peony Pavilion*, Ong sought an 'experiential' performance in which audiences felt the passing of time as 'lived' experiences. Thus, Ong's decision to make the music and musicians central to the performance was motivated by the philosophy that "the music evokes the time and space to undergo the transformation of the four seasons. So the audience is not only experiencing the music but is completely immersed in the cycle of life itself" (Director's Notes, Singapore Programme). Ong's equation of sonic with metaphysical universals consequently engendered, in the space of performance, an aesthetically seductive idea of an intercultural acoustemology.

Juxtaposition & Quotation: The (Sonic) Structure of Performance

By giving precedence to the music and musicians and allowing the antipodal musical styles and original composition by Qu Xiao-Song (瞿小松)[6] to be foregrounded, *Awaking* placed in quotations the 'musical-theatre' genre while conceiving an intercultural nouveau. The

[5] Listen to *Fourth World, Vol 1: Possible Musics*, 1980. Produced by Brian Eno and Jon Hassell Celestial Sounds and *Fourth World, Vol 2: Dream Theory in Malaya*, 1981. Produced by Jon Hassell. Grant Avenue Studio.

[6] Qu is a Chinese composer whose works experiment with form and style resulting in the characteristic sounds that combine the traditional and contemporary. He is often regarded as the leading Chinese composer of contemporary classical music and though having lived in the United States for many years, he currently teaches at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music. Qu's East-West musical influences and transmigratory lifestyle is significant in understanding the 'intercultural' sounds of *Awaking*.

"Musicians of The Globe" sat down-stage right while members of the Singapore Chinese Orchestra sat down stage left. Two musicians from the Northern Kunqu Opera Theatre sat centre stage between these two dominant musical traditions while upstage was transformed into a wave-like platform for Kunqu actress Wei Chun Rong (魏春荣)[7] to perform on. A comprehension of the proxemic relations between the performers, and of spectator to performance / performers frames not only Ong's supposed intention of juxtaposing forms and styles but also of the seeming incompatibility of philosophies and phonologies between Chinese and Western music. As intercultural performance, the visual aesthetics adumbrated an acoustic interculturalism – where the aural preceded the ocular. In addition, the static and divided bodies on stage, apart from Wei's movements and dances that cross aesthetic and proxemic borders, could be said to gesture to a recognition of the impossibilities of interculturalism and the acceptance of diversity.

The dramatic structure of the performance further exemplifies Ong's dramatic philosophy of juxtaposition as central tenet of the intercultural. The performance was partitioned as five acts with each act juxtaposing, musically, the preceeding, leading to the finale. Each prior act featured the musics of the cultural divide with Acts I and III assigned to the performance of momentous scenes from *The Peony Pavilion* and Qu's contemporary classical composition, and Acts II and IV showcasing songs from Shakespeare's plays. The universals of love, life and death were interwoven into this structure of "quotations" – "quoting from Shakespeare's plays and quoting from Tang's *The Peony Pavillion*" (Director's Notes, Singapore Programme). This antiphonal quotational structure culminated in a finale where "the universe unite[d]."[8] The final act saw the involvement of all musicians – both East and West – with the attempt to create an orchestral denouement of a journey into the after-life, an alternate consciousness reflected through what John Corbett explains as a mise en abyme.[9] As Ong iterates, "I was also interested in looking at the finale as a play within a play, as a kernel into which the soul walks into, like a tunnel of light, towards the awaking of another consciousness" (Director's Notes, Singapore Programme).

Awaking to a 'Fourth World': An Intercultural Acoustemology

[7] Wei is a renowned Kunqu actress and has performed the role of Du Liniang from *Mudan Ting* several times. She is also the recipient of the coveted Plum Blossom Award in 2003, an award that recognises artists of Chinese Opera in China. Her performance of Du Liniang can be seen on *Youtube*. See "昆曲《牡丹亭》魏春荣 Wei Chun Rong 王瑾 北昆 Kun Opera" for an excerpt of her performance <http://www.youtube.com /watch?v=qQEyup4iq4Q>.

[8] This is the title of the Final Act.

[9] This concept of a musicultural mise en abyme will be explicated in greater detail in the later sections of this chapter.

While the dramatic structure of antiphonal citations metatheatrically performs philosophical and cultural dissimilarities underlying two different musical systems, and the purported incompatibilities behind Renaissance music and Chinese classical and Kunqu sounds, the final Act effects a potential reversal of dramatic attitudes through a performance of syncretism within sound types, and between sight and sound.

In the attempt to unite universes, physical and metaphysical, visual and aural, Western and Far Eastern, Ong and Qu engineered an aural performative created as a sonic 'spectacle.'[10] The 'awaking' to a 'Fourth World' was an acoustic space of simulated harmony between the three performance styles and two dominant cultural traditions.[11] The compositional structure of the finale distinctly reflects the movement, both musical and theatrical, toward an intercultural acoustemology [00:47:19]. Qu necessitated an involvement of all musicians segregated, proxemically, on the stage. While the solitary video screen located above the stage revealed two geometric circles merging, as a most overt signifier of merging universes, a violin solo, played by the violinist from The Globe ensemble, performed a variation from Qu's theme for *Awaking* as the *luo* (锣) (Chinese high tin-bronze gong)[12] reverberated with a deep resonant echo mimicking the effects of 'hollow' sounds from outer space inspired clearly by Science Fiction movies. The audience saw Wei emerge from offstage stripped of the vestimentary and cosmetic codes that had earlier assigned her as a *guimen dan* (闺门旦), a particular female role of the Kunqu tradition [00:51:16].[13] Garbed in a layered 'patchwork' floral dress, and gracefully manipulating a fan in her hand, she danced across still abiding by the stylized kinesic movements of Kunqu. The physical 'deconstruction' of her *dan* (旦) role mirrored the visual narrative of Singaporean Choy Ka Fai's cosmetic 'deconstruction' of character (Du Liniang) to become actor (Wei) seen on the screen above [00:48:00]. Yet her stage speech (*nianbai*, 念白) was performed as lyric couplets (*lian*, 联) indicating retention of the vocal modulations of the performance form.

The visual and aural juxtaposition provoked a discursive confrontation that engendered questions of identity location suggesting that the character Wei plays is no longer and has now metamorphosed. The stage speech affirms such a reading for they refer to a

[10] Admittedly, the term spectacle has always been used with reference to visual aesthetics. There is however an increasing association of the term with the aural sense particularly in the area of Film Studies.

[11] In the post-show dialogue, Ong calls this a 'Third World' – a transcendental new space which engenders a new culture. For Ong, transcultural work necessitated the creation of something new. "Through layering, collage, juxtaposition and quotation, a new space emerges in the finale."

[12] For a more thorough understanding on the timbre, tonal qualities and performative functions of Chinese musical instruments, see Lee Yuan-Yuan and Shen Sin-Yan, *Chinese Musical Instruments*.

[13] The *guimen dan* is a role that usually demarcates maturity and relative youth along with an impeccable ability at singing and dance-acting. They are usually of high social status and are unmarried. See Xiao Li, *Chinese Kunqu Opera* 41-45; Jo Riley, *Chinese Theatre and the Actor in Performance*, 14.

process of transformation that comes with the changing of the seasons: "Winter is gone, Spring has arrived. Short dreams and long dreams. Sleeping ends but one is still in a dream. Awake! Spring" [00:52:07]. The dislocated syntax and fragmented semantics, indubitably a condition of translation, was followed with a clash of the cymbals (*bo*, 钹) and the climax resolved on the mellifluous woodwind tunes from the *dizi* (笛子, bamboo flute) that subsequently filtered the accompanying Buddhist mantra, 'Om Mani Padme Hum,' chanted by the SCO musicians. Pickett's English piccolo partook in the woodwind sounds and following this the distinctive 'wailing' resonance of Chinese *huqin*-s (胡琴)[14] were heard as other instruments, such as the *pipa* (琵琶, a Chinese lute) and *sheng* (笙, a mouth-blown reed instrument of vertical pipes) gradually entered the composite refrain in a showcase of 'musical grafts' and sonorous layering. The interplay of cultural sounds quietened, and the movement of unification was repeated as Wei revealed her 'water sleeves' (水袖, shui xiu)[15] and moved gracefully to the cosmic soundscape created by the reverberating gong and the strains of the cellos [00:57:52]. In this sequence of forward cyclicity, accompanied by a crescendo of musical concordance that culminates in a climax, Wei welcomed the coming of Autumn and advented the conjoining of universes.

Autumn is marked by Wei's continued dance in celebration of the passing of Spring and the bountiful harvest of Autumn, achieved through classic *yunshou* (云手, cloud-hands) gestures that expressed her joyous emotions [01:01:13].[16] As Wei welcomed the conjoining of universes, her patterns of rounded movements, an essential aesthetic philosophy in Chinese

Theatre,[17] culminated in an embrace of the moon seen as the classic pose of *baoyueshi* (抱月式) [01:03:10]. The mantra 'Om Mani Padme Hum,' chanted by the SCO musicians, accompanied

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[14] *Huqin* refers to a series of instruments including the *erhu* (二胡), *zhonghu* (中胡) and *gaohu* (高胡), all of which are bowed string instruments. The *gaohu* produces the highest-pitch while the *zhonghu* the lowest.

[15] The 'water sleeves' are sleeve extensions of the costumes that consist of a length of white silk worn by *Sheng* and *Dan* roles in Chinese theatre. They are cultural iconic signifiers and are used to signal to the orchestra that the actor is ready to speak or sing. Movements and 'flicks' of the water sleeves also characterize role, attitude and emotional state of the character. See Riley, 59, 175-6. See also A.C. Scott, "The Performance of Classical Theatre" in *Chinese Theatre: From Its Origins to the Present Day*, ed. Colin Mackerras, 31. In *Awaking*, the twirling motions indicate, perhaps the merging of universes and the passing of time. It seemed also done for aesthetic effect, as a dance, more than the symbolic roles the sleeves assume in a kunqu or jingju performance.

[16] Autumn marks the end of the harvesting period in Chinese society and Chinese and Vietnamese societies celebrate the Mid-Autumn Festival (中秋节) as a popular harvest festival which marks the end of harvesting. It is also on this night of Mid-Autumn that the moon is at its brightest with many myths surrounding the beauty of the moon such as that of *Chang'e* (嫦娥).

[17] 'Pattern of roundness' is an essential aesthetic principle in Chinese Theatre. It is regarded as emblematic of perfection, holism, and beauty. But more importantly, it has cosmological and philosophical significance related to yin-yang and the *Luo* (落) matrix where, in combination with all other aspects of performance, metaphorically unifies all times and spaces in the theatre space. See Riley, 295-331.

the visual signifiers of autumn. With each chant cycle completed, there was an upward modulation by a major second indicating aurally a journey toward nirvana and enlightenment – recognizably a musical articulation of the uniting universes [01:02:17]. The following rest was punctuated by the enchanting sounds of the piccolo playing to the tune of 'Walsingham.' Joanne Lunn followed with a solo performance of the mantra sung to the established melody ("Walsingham") [01:03:35]. While Lunn's solitary soprano voice filled the auditorium with the chant, Wei removed her costume to reveal yet another beneath – a casual dress that is removed from cultural signification, a vestimentary sign perhaps of the mundane schizophrenic condition that is consequent of re-birth and regeneration into a new postmodern 'Fourth World.' The cosmetic act of cultural erasure seen as the textuality of the actor's body is undoubtedly a dramatic signifier of the re-birth of Du Liniang and the union of universes in the time and space of the here and now. Yet the 'un-dressing' ironically performs, metadramatically, a renunciation of tradition for modernity in the search for a universal language both musical and theatrical. In *Listening to Theatre*, Elizabeth Wichmann's observes how, in jingju (京剧), "everything in the world of the play must above all be beautiful (mei, 美)" (2) and all aspects of the performance adhere strictly to this basic aesthetic value. This is certainly true of all Chinese performance styles and art itself. In Chinese theatre, the aesthetic principle of *xieyi* (写艺), which literally means to write/paint/draw the meaning, pervades the process of preparation to performance in any artform and in particular theatre. *Xieyi*, as opposed to *xieshi* (写实), which is to write realistically, conveys the essence of things in portrayal and beauty is consequently a necessity in Chinese performance (Wichmann 2-3). The performative event of 'undressing,' adumbrated by Choy's earlier virtualised act of deconstructing the *dan* character, gestured to an abandonment and erasure of the fundamental principle of beauty (mei, 美). The finale was thus a confounding moment of an anti-aestheticism that juxtaposed the flourish of musical syncretism. More significantly, it was a performative representation of the practical necessities in producing interculturalism today – an abandonment of what Clifford Geertz regards as the 'deep structures' of cultural practice for the surface essentials configured as aesthetic enchantment.

The closing movements of the finale, beyond an engendering of the fictional cosmic revolution and 'unification' of worlds effected via a melodic transmutation that mirrored the visual makeover performed by Wei, staged an identity politics of (inter)cultural negotiations – both theatrical and musical. The melody of 'Walsingham' flowed and ebbed into the crescending theme of *Awaking* effected by the growing involvement of Chinese instruments

[01:07:06].[18] As a poignant dramatic moment of universes uniting, the opening 4 bars of that movement performed a dramaturgical prospect of an acoustic interculturalism. A surface listening to the artful integration of the melody of 'Walsingham' with the theme of *Awaking* gestures to a celebration of the possibility of music to create universals where other languages of the stage are unable to. The seamless blending of sonorities and the coherence of cultural musical forms in inter-play performed, in that suspended event of musical fantasy, a seductive interculturalism.

When one considers the significance of this musical movement, one *hears* the overtones of synthesis and *sees* its occurrence with the inclusion of the various instruments from the cultural divides on stage. In the post-show dialogue, Qu explains that this is the dramatic moment of universes uniting and it is structured as the lyrical transformation of 'How Should I Your True Love Know / Walsingham' to that of the Buddhist mantra. Musically, the shifting variations on the tune of the former eventually became tonally assimilated by the theme from *Awaking* thereby performing melodically the harmony – cosmic and musical – that was desired. The intercultural intersection can thus be heard as different signifying vectors converging on a compositional flourish that is aurally pleasing and perhaps even sublime. The currents of exchange in this sonic interzone then are not only located in melody or the formal structure of the composition but also in song – in the metamorphosis of lyrical translatibilities to Buddhist untranslatables.

Listening In/To the Other: Acoustic Orientals and Occidentals

While the fusion of cultural sounds and styles engendered this 'Fourth World' of intercultural possibilities, alternative ways of (deep) listening to the soundscapes of *Awaking* disclose the project not as an utopian universal but an appropriative reversal or reclamation of acoustic identity in the political theatre of interculturalism.

Critiquing the intercultural music of Jon Hassell, John Corbett sees the 'Fourth World' of world music possibilities not as a topography of alternatives or an utopian interzone where all cultures mingle freely and without anxiety of authenticity or propriety but an imperialistic equation of Third World musics being added to First World sounds (175-8). In *Awaking*, however, it was 'First World' sounds becoming assimilated by 'Third World' experimental

[18] Listen to track 2 on *Shakespeare's Musick: Songs and Dances from Shakespeare's Plays. Musicians of the Globe* (Philips Classics Productions, 1997. 4446 687-2) for a rendition of the original tune of "Walsingham."

discourses.[19] 'Walsingham' became appropriated and consumed by an overtly 'Chinese' composition. The metamorphosis of linguistic signifiers performed a political process of an Eastern philosophy and religion grafted onto an Elizabethan tune; the sonorities of an English soprano were subverted by the religious semantics of an Eastern mantra.

Alluding to the acoustic power-plays occurring in the performance, Singaporean playwright Robert Yeo,[20] in the post-show dialogue, queried about the ways in which the Elizabethan songs featured in the production seemed 'overshadowed'[21] by the Chinese musical elements. Yeo was specifically referring to Act IV in which the songs selected, such as "The Witches Dance" from *Macbeth*, "O Mistress mine" from *Twelfth Night*, and "It was a Lover and His Lass" from *As You Like It*, did not seem to cohere with the overarching theme of eternal love and transcendence; the songs were heard as random insertions to feature Elizabethan songs [00:39:41]. Yeo's inquiry was equally relevant when understood in the context of the performance's segmented dramatic structure and 'coerced' unification of sounds in the final act where the hybrid composition sounded predominantly 'Chinese.' The differences in timbres, tonalities and methodologies of Renaissance music became eclipsed by Ong and Qu's dramaturgical 'World Music' strategy. Yeo's acute observation, or rather listening, exemplifies a deep listening to the cultural architectonics essential in such 'new age' theatrical dialogues. What was composed as a journey towards re-birth realised through an acoustic universalism could be heard as an acoustic Occidentalism.

This Occidentalism is not merely a simplistic model of Saidian Orientalism inverted nor is it a strategic subversion or writing 'against' and in opposition to the Western Other but a complex process of selection, re-appropriation, assimilation, and transformation of 'foreign' properties. In *Occidentalism: A Theory of Counter-Discourse in Post-Mao China*, Chen Xiaomei defines Occidentalism in China as "a discursive practice, that, by constructing its Western Other, has allowed the Orient to participate actively and with indigenous creativity in the process of self-appropriation, even after being appropriated and constructed by Western Others" (Chen, *Occidentalism* 4-5). Chen concludes, in view of this, that

[19] I use the terms 'First' and 'Third' Worlds here loosely recognizing that the rapidly changing economic landscape has led to China being thrust onto the First World playing field. In addition, these Elizabethan tunes, recognizably, are hardly characteristic of a First World England but nevertheless are associated with England's cultural dominance then. Furthermore, it reifies my argument about the dichotomies of West/East prevalent in the production despite the attempts at concord and harmony.

[20] Robert Yeo is one of Singapore's leading playwrights and is among the first generation of artists after independence. He is a Public Service Medal winner (1991) and his plays have often dealt with political issues openly. *The Singapore Trilogy* (2001) consisting of 'Are You There Singapore', 'One Year Back Home' and 'Changi,' examines critically the politics of nationhood and nation building.

[21] This is the actual word chosen by Yeo to describe the Elizabethan elements in their interaction with the Chinese composition.

> [...] the Chinese Orient has produced a new discourse, marked by a particular combination of the Western construction of China with the Chinese construction of the West, with both of these components interacting and interpenetrating each other (5).

While Chen's views address specifically the state of Chinese theatre in the Post-Mao era, they resound with relevance in the context of Qu's cosmopolitical composition where the cosmopolitical is defined here as the musical relationships possible as a consequence of global economic imperatives and transnational market forces.[22] Qu's soundtrack, in the light of such considerations, exemplifies a Chinese musical discourse that consumed and made-own qualities of its Western Other – here an Elizabethan tune that Philip Pickett notes with a high degree of certainty was a historical rendition of the popular ayre sung in 16th century England.[23] While Pickett attempted to allay Yeo's doubts by making salient the composer's ethnic and cultural background, and hence the resulting Chinese cultural-acoustic dominance in composition, the comment accentuates implicitly the impossibilities of any egalitarian compromise or equilibrium point in intercultural negotiations. Pavis's source-target bi-way assimilative model that seeks to create an utopian intercultural mise en scène is effectively disproved. Yet while the intercultural hourglass has since been shattered, the grains of power relations contained within these cross-cultural dialogic prevails. Martin Stokes aptly observes how even in this age of diffused cultural and ethnic boundaries consequent of global movements and tourism, musicians do become overwhelmed by a consciousness of other musics. In the encounter with the Other, "they struggle to make sense of them, incorporate them, relegate them to lower rungs on ladders of complexity, difficulty, interest [...] in terms dictated by their own musics and views of the world" (Stokes 16). Such hybrid musicultural, and theatrical, events are then always already contests of power.

An Aesthetics of the Global Imagination: Harmony and Hybridity

The performance of the finale raises questions about the conditions in which universality can (or cannot) exist in performance. Veit Erlman, in "The Aesthetics of the Global Imagination," contends that the phenomenon of world music is a "new aesthetic form of the global

[22] The concept of 'cosmopolitanism' is the focus of Helen Gilbert and Jacqueline Lo's theorizations of intercultural performance today. See *Performance and Cosmopolitics: Cross Cultural Transactions in Australasia*. The term has also been introduced in the introductory chapter.

[23] Philip Pickett notes, in the post-show dialogue, that although there were three varying versions of the tune 'Walsingham,' they all had strong similarities with variations only in certain musical phrases and notations.

imagination" where differences between tradition, authenticity, and modernity dissolve. There is a loss of referentiality and a triumph of the culture of simulacrum (Erlman, "Aesthetics" 467). For musical universality to exist, sonic, historical, cultural, linguistic, philosophical, spiritual and religious specificities must seemingly be abridged and simplified in the process of re-imagining a homogenous global community. Pastiche, as Erlman alludes, seems to be the necessary condition for engendering the hybridity of World Music. Erlman's view of pastiche is an adaptation of R. Murray Schafer's concept of 'schizophonia' defined as the "split between an original sound and its electroacoustical transmission or reproduction" (*The Soundscape* 90). Although Schafer devised the term to refer to the acoustic dislocation of sounds from their sources and points of emission and enunciation, be it the instrumental or bodily, the concept can be re-figured to consider how World Music extracts and relocates sounds as a schizophrenic phenomenon where acoustics are dislocated from historical and cultural contexts. This condition of schizophrenia is akin to Fredric Jameson's notion of cultural schizophrenia where the experience of postmodernity is one of a psychic fragmentation and dislocation from a sense of history and context. Art will enter "in a whole new culture of the image or the simulacrum; a consequent weakening of historicity" (Jameson 58). With *Awaking* as exemplum, pastiche is perhaps the only musical and theatrical technique that facilitates the conditions of uttering universals.

While the concerns and disputations raised by ethnomusicologists such as Corbett and Erlmann are valid and compelling, one cannot disregard the transmuting effects of global enterprise in the music industry. The same observations can be made of intercultural theatre and the hybrid products on the post-postmodern 'globalised' stage. As Fernando Ortiz acutely observes, transculturation had led to a new kind of cultural phenomenon – neoculturation (103). While this neoculture, or new 'world' culture, reflective of the global citizen phenomenon, threatens, with considerable violence, the episteme of tradition and 'authenticity,' it has created autonomous forms of new possibilities. Taking a different perspective from more conservative attitudes toward these new world possibilities, Simon Frith asserts that hybridity is the new form of authenticity in music. Music in an era of globalization powerfully affirms the syncretic nature of contemporary cultural identity (Born and Hesmondhalgh 30). Musical traditions, to Frith, are only preserved by constant innovation and "musical creativity always involves cultural borrowings; changes in musical tradition don't mean the loss of cultural identity but articulate the way it changes with circumstance" (Frith 311-2). Such hybrid musical styles and sounds thus reflect the postmodern condition characterized by the collapse of grand musical narratives and authorities, and in the blurring of musical borders and histories. World music can thus be treated as "the sound of postmodern experience" (Frith 315). Firth echoes, and cites, Timothy Taylor's belief of "the global postmodern" in which "new

technologies and modes of musical production allow musicians to occupy different subject positions in a kind of simultaneity never before possible; they don't move from one to the next but rather employ and deploy several at once" (Taylor, *Global Pop* 94).

In the post-show dialogue, as response to apprehensions raised by Robert Yeo, Ong firmly asserts that the performance goes 'beyond' by creating new (trans-cendental) spaces in such transcultural work. For Ong, *Awaking* mirrors Du Liniang's trans-formational resurrection and trans-corporeal journey. As Buddhism is transnational, Ong reflects, and does not belong to the Chinese merely today, *Awaking* engenders a transcultural 'third' culture or 'third' space through the interplay of layering, collage, juxtapositions and quotations.[24]

In "Of Other Spaces, Heterotopias," Michel Foucault alludes to the existence of third spaces through an analysis of the concept of spatiality in the history of Western experience. Space, according to Foucault, derives its existence and significance only in relation to other spaces. Heterotopias thus exist not as utopias nor as counter-sites but in liminal topographies where they are "outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality" (Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," para 12). These heterogeneous spaces are capable of asserting resistance to social hegemonies. They are able to combine several spaces in a single real space through juxtaposition (as the theatre is able to) and every culture possesses their own heterotopias. Because heterotopias function in relation to the space that remains, its role is to

> create a space of illusion that exposes every real space, all the sites inside of which human life is partitioned, as still more illusory [...] Or else, on the contrary, [...] to create a space that is other, another real space, as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is messy, ill constructed, and jumbled (Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," para 26).

The third space that is the final act seems to celebrate then a Foucauldian heterotopia – a harmonious space of cross-cultural fusion effected through the universalist principle of music. It can be viewed as an acoustic chimera that discloses the 'real' spaces of cultural and musical boundaries as illusory constructs.

In considering cultural materialities, however, Barry Truax purports that acoustic information is derived from the environment and it contextualises one's awareness

[24] The term 'third space' is used by Ong to describe this new 'world' created. Ironically, Ong seems to, here, exemplify the same essentialisms that he is known to be vehemently against. He considers the Kunqu form similar to the elements of Chinese classical music and they can be regarded as one 'culture'. While this may be superficially and categorically so, the specificities of form, style, and history are ignored in such a generalisation.

("Electroacoustic Music" 376). Sound is always already determined by cultural referentiality and "the acoustic environment is always experienced within specific cultural contexts. Our ears are tuned by culture" (Folkerth, 34). First elucidated by Marvin Harris, in the field of anthropology, as a methodology that studies the infrastructural, structural and superstructural principles that determine cultural practices and the evolution of culture, cultural materialism has since been more commonly regarded, in the field of cultural studies and literary theory, as a study of historicism and historical context which grant ideological authority to social powers.[25] All 'texts' as such are determined by, and inevitably confers reciprocally, the ideologies of a culture and cultural period. Culture is thus, as Raymond Williams notes, as much material as it is always political.[26] The soundscape in *Awaking* fails to escape the cultural materialities that inscribe acoustic information and grant it meaningfulness for the semiotics of the mise en scène dictate the cultural polemics that exist prior to the production of sound. Sound is always already determined by history and culture. In attempting to breach Otherness with the 'same,' *Awaking* created, in itself, a heterotopic Other that in its infinite reflection underscored more of the same – the sameness of cultural appropriation and counter-appropriation, the sameness of performative anomie, and the sameness of the strange creature that is the intercultural.

Aural Exoticism:
Ritual, Mantras and (Performance) Universals

Awaking complicates the political dynamics of cultural practice not only by its attempted dismantling of sonic boundaries in a performative act of acoustic utopia but also by the introduction of the discourse of religion and belief.[27] One can consider how the recurring Buddhist mantra, that is the refrain of Qu's composition, becomes a third 'cultural element' (and certainly a distinct performance tradition) introduced to the performance syntax. As performative element, its recurrence as refrain and repetition as chant becomes a dominant sonic presence that erases all other aural signifiers and appropriates all other cultural languages. The cyclical performance of "Om Mani Padme Hum" reverberates across the entire performance thereby evidencing chants' appropriative abilities in engraving acoustic signatures subliminally not only through replication but the annexation of the characteristics of

[25] See Marvin Harris, *The Rise of Anthropological Theory: A History of Theories of Culture* for the genesis of the term 'Cultural Materialism.'
[26] See Raymond Williams, "Culture is Ordinary," *Studies in Culture: An Introduction*, 5-14.
[27] It is disputed by religious teachers, practitioners of the faith and theologians that Buddhism is not a religion but rather a way of life and a philosophy or set of beliefs and practices. This debate, however, is beyond the scope and concern of this thesis.

Elizabethan songs: ease of singing due to flowing pitch patterns, firm pentatonic melodies and high degree of emotionality due to word painting (a musical representation of specific poetic images).

'Om Mani Padme Hum' is a Tibetan mantra derived from earlier Hindu mantras of the same. There is no exact translation or strict equivalent in any language nor is there a corresponding lexis that can be used to explain its semantic density. H. H. Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama, provides perhaps a clear explication when he explains how

> The meaning of the six syllables is great and vast [...] The first, Om [...] symbolizes the practitioner's impure body, speech, and mind; it also symbolizes the pure exalted body, speech, and a mind of a Buddha [...] The path is indicated by the next four syllables. Mani, meaning jewel, symbolizes the factors of method: the altruistic intention to become enlightened, [and to show] compassion and love [...] The two syllables, padme, meaning lotus, symbolise wisdom [...] Thus the six syllables, Om Mani Padme Hum, mean that in dependence on the practice of a path which is an indivisible union of method and wisdom, you can transform your impure body, speech, and mind into the pure exalted body, speech, and mind of a Buddha ("On the meaning of: Om Mani Padme Hum")

The emphasis on symbolism in the description testifies to the failure of literal expression. The impossibilities of translation are perhaps appropriate to the nature of mantras for mantras exist only as verbal expressions located in the act of chanting. Chants work on the principle of the recurrence of sound and Tibetan Buddhists believe that the repetition of this phrase as a monotonal vocal expression invokes the powerful benevolent blessings of *Chenrezig*, the embodiment of the compassion of all Buddhas, otherwise known as *Avalokitesvara* in Sanskrit and *Guan Yin* (观音) in Chinese. The mantra exemplifies the failure of language and speech, where vocabulary and grammar cease to depict reality, and advocates a primacy and pre-linguistic power of sound. The sonorities and timbre generate meaning and significance – it is the sonic quality that possesses the power to invoke a transcendental truth. It is sound that conjures and materialises meaning that is beyond referential and absolutists' determinations of musical signification. In the words of Kalu Rinpoche, "through mantra, we no longer cling to the reality of the speech and sound encountered in life, but experience it as essentially empty. Then confusion of the speech aspect of our being is transformed into enlightened awareness" ("Om Mani Padme Hum – The Transformation of Speech," para 1).

Ian Mabbett writes of the intimate relation between Buddhism and music, and notes that "a chanted mantra is clearly a powerful ritual act in its own right. Mantras, most of them

single syllables, without any meaning in normal language, are secret incantations charged with spiritual energy" (21). *Awaking* is distinctly an attempt at transculturation effected through the oral and oracular powers of religion, or at least religious mantras. It is an attempt at awaking not only to an after-life located in the narrative of *The Peony Pavilion*, but to a 'Fourth World' of a cultural-religious hybrid that is located in its associations with the spiritual powers of a metaphysical compassion. In many ways, the performance exemplified, quite literally, the ritualisation of modern theatre or more specifically modern music theatre. Observing modernist music theater today, William Anthony Sheppard notes that this is "a genre created at the margins of several performing art forms, a genre often arising between cultures, and one that repeatedly aspires to the liminal state of ritualistic experience" (16-17). The incorporation of mantras, chants, transcendental motifs and a narrative thread of the after-life echoes early theories of performance studies articulated by Richard Schechner whose work was derived from Victor Turner's studies of universals of performance understood through ritual and ritual practices, and the ritualisation of social experience.[28] *Awaking* is musical theatre that indicates ritual intent as revealed by Qu in the post-show dialogue in which he expresses his intentions for global compassion as a consequence of the melodic repetition of "Om Mani Padme Hum." The immanence of the chanting voices, their sonorities of 'liveness' seemingly materialised those transcendental values. Furthermore, the musicality of the performance accentuates its performatively ritualistic qualities; it created a "ritualistic temporality by suggesting a static or metatemporal state achieved [...] through [...] repeated rhythms [and] unmeasured and amorphous musical sections [...] The music itself seems to serve as the device of transformation" (Sheppard 21-22). Similar to rituals, the audience then was not only to be enchanted and mesmerized but also become an engaged congregation by partaking in the rhetoric of ritual; they would then subsequently be transformed by the experience. As Mabbet observes of music in ritual, "music as a contributor to the epiphany of the sacred at a large assembly can, of course, be considered as a means of altering the consciousness of those present, even, in a sense, of inducing a sort of trance state" (24). While the congregational participation may not be active, since the audience is confined by the proxemics of a proscenium theatre, a mental involvement could (and is perhaps intended to) occur with the signature tune of the chant.

As an engagement with performance theory, *Awaking*, viewed as ritual, ironically did little that was new either as theatre or music theatre but instead subscribed to Euro-American models of performance universals located as ritual; it was mimicry of Western performance

[28] See the Introductory Chapter for a more thorough explication of the influence of ritual on theories of interculturalism. See also Victor Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play* and "Are There Universals of Performance in Myth, Ritual, and Drama?" in *By Means of Performance*, 8-18.

ideologies, principles and prototypes. Ong created yet another form of ritualised performance employing a common modernist trope. In an ironic reversal and as a mirror distortion of intentions, the image of the 'Orient' was made acutely exotic even more through this emphasis on ritual.

With a composition that has movements distinctly engendered from the musical refrain of the chant, Qu and Ong dramatised acoustically a plane that seemingly crossed ethnic and cultural topographies by locating the universal as ritual (or a vague notion of spirituality). Yet the desired effect of transcended 'enlightened awareness' is unverifiable and indeterminate at best; the outcomes to the proselytizing intentions of global/universal compassion embodied in the mantra's performance, as advocated by Qu in the post-show dialogue, are also doubtful. Viewed through the lens of cultural politics, however, this performance motif challenges assumed notions of intercultural discourse as interstitial modalities of mediations between cultures for it engages an alternate 'culture' located in the ethereal and spiritual. Amidst the heated debates between divergent, often antagonistic, intercultural faiths, *Awaking* seems to be proselytizing that Buddhism is the new intercultural and the mantra the new universal expression of the cross-cultural dialogic.

The concept of the universal is often regarded, in academe and particular cultural studies, as a Western postmodern reinvention of rediscovering cultural similarities and deep structures rather than dissimilarity that has led history to witness countless conflicts (and especially so in a post 9-11 world). Yet as Immanuel Wallerstein acutely observes, universalism was

> propagated by those who held economic and political power in the world-system of historical capitalism. Universalism was offered to the world as a gift of the powerful to the weak. The gift itself harboured racism, for it gave the recipient two choices: accept the gift, thereby acknowledging that one was low on the hierarchy of achieved wisdom; refuse the gift, thereby denying oneself weapons that could reverse the unequal real power situation (85).

If we abide by Wallerstein's observation, the performance of a chant that characterises what is commonly regarded as an 'Eastern' religion, then this new universalism propounds a subliminal rejection of Western universals through subversion and usurpation. The 'gift,' as it is so in *Awaking*, has been accepted but is now returned re-packaged as reversed-racism, as Occidentalism. Yet such counter-positions merely reinforce the dichotomies the performance itself seeks to eradicate.

Considered within a framework of Reception Aesthetics, however, the dominant reading proposed of this religious sonority may not be effectively decoded by an audience devoid of any understanding of Buddhism and much less the 'meaning' of 'Om Mani Padme Hum.'[29] Recognisably, cultural formation is an imperative aspect of audience competence and efficacy in reception as Susan Bennett rightly notes of theatre and the theatrical experience generally.

> Certainly we should not talk of theatre as an art form in isolation from cultural practice generally and, while the sociology of culture remains a controversial discipline, it is sure necessary that drama theorists maintain an interest in, and a dialogue with, that particular research (93).

Beyond the discourse of cultural production in a theatrical event, cultural reception is a necessary consideration of performance analysis. It is apparent that the intercultural negotiation should be as much between the sign-texts of the performance as it is an engagement with the audience for in that dialogue the problematics of intercultural communication become salient. Many of Ong's earlier works have always contained an obsession with negotiating cultures by way of postdramatic forms, or what many Singapore theatre practitioners term 'process theatre,' as an exposition on the complexities of finding a common language. This introspective and introverted focus on process, most salient in *Desdemona*, has often led to the neglect of the *process of reception* resulting in the break down of the intercultural dialogue (and the consequent harsh criticisms of his work as discussed in the previous chapter). Although *Awaking* premiered in multi-cultural Singapore where almost 42.5% of the population are proclaimed Buddhists,[30] "[w]ithin cultural boundaries, there are [...] obviously different viewing publics" (Bennett 94). For a public whose knowledge of Buddhism is limited or for those who are unfamiliar with the mantra employed, the vocal chants would have served nothing more than aural exotica – a performative device in an elaborate acoustic apparatus. Qu's intended performance of compassion would have communicated little more than surface effects to achieve the narrative union or merely conveyed the 'beautiful in music.'[31] In many ways, this precedence accorded to Asia's (or China,

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[29] The terms 'dominant reading' and encoding/decoding are Stuart Hall's concepts of reception. Essentially, Hall believes that visual texts such as film and television (and theatre can be included as well) employ a process of encoding, by the producers/director, the intended message and in the viewing there is an active process of decoding. This process of decoding results in a 'reading' of the text which may not always result in a preferred (or dominant) reading. There can be an oppositional reading. Such consequences result from the social and cultural backgrounds of the viewer. See *Encoding and Decoding in the Television Discourse*.

[30] This figure is taken from the National Census in 2000. See *"Census of Population 2000,"* Advance Data Release No. 2, *Statistics Singapore* <http://www.singstat.gov.sg/pubn/popn/c2000adr/chap5.pdf>.

[31] This is the title of Eduard Hanslick's seminal work on musical aesthetics. Hanslick is often considered the father of modern musical criticism and in *On the Musically Beautiful*, Hanslick emphasizes the absolute quality

in the case of *Awaking*) oral tradition, premiered as a 'new age' re-composition of a 11 century religious mantra,[32] aptly exemplifies Jean-Marie Leduc's theory of transmusic where that which is 'trans' is as much 'trance music' as it is 'transversal music.' It is music that "crosses the musical and mental barriers to look for ecstasy, the true feeling that surpasses everything" (Leduc 636). While it is without any degree of certainty that one could be emoted with a 'true feeling' in listening to "Om Mani Padme Hum" performed in *Awaking*, the fleeting pleasures of ecstasy are undoubtedly a bi-product of this sonic popularisation.

The acoustic as exotic is further accentuated by the visual prominence of the singing body. As Lunn stood to continue her solo chant of the mantra in the closing moments of the performance, the distinct high tessitura produced by a white body resounded above the prevailing refrain produced by unaccompanied Asian voices intoning the mantra simultaneously [01:06:41]. This performative action engendered a schism between the visual and aural signifiers and resulted in a reversed exoticism where the Other is not the Asian body but the English one who attempts to pronounce an Asian philosophy. This fissure of sound and cultural location is also apparent in the materiality of the voice where Western classical training compels one's production of vocal sounds to be 'full' and 'rounded.' Lunn's singing voice, in the bel-canto tradition, abides by the demands of Western classical vocal music and the sharp differences in timbre with the vocal sounds produced by Asian bodies can be heard. The currents of appropriation and re-appropriation thus occur at several levels where one could first consider the white body enchanting the audience with the hypnotic melodies of an Asian (arguably Hindu and Buddhist) mantra but whose performance is dictated and contained within the distinctly 'Chinese' composition of which the chant is merely a refrain.

The dynamics of cultural negotiation reveal then the inverse and reversed positions of alterity. More importantly, this performative event reveals the perplexities of acoustic interculturalism that extend beyond binary arguments of I/You, West/East. The attempted synthesis of Eastern and Western sounds and the predominant reverberations of an Asian mantra harmonised by a white voice unseat easy declamations about performance imperialism. Source and target positions become obscured and destabilised in the cacophony of appropriations and counter-appropriations. Acoustemologically, *Awaking* exemplifies Corbett's views about a neo-Orientalist and self-exotic trend in new age compositions today such as

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of music as beauty in its own right. Based on a formalism in Kant's aesthetic of the beautiful, Hanslick believes that while music can be expressive of emotion it is not that which defines its being. Musical meaning is extraneous to the "intrinsic beauty" (68) of music. See Eduard Hanslick, *On the Musically Beautiful A Contribution towards the Revision of the Aesthetics of Music*.

[32] The first description of the mantra appears in the Karandavyuha Sutra (佛說大乘莊嚴寶王經). See Alexander Studholme, *The Origins of Om Manipadme Hum: A Study of the Karandavyuha Sutra*, 256.

those by Chinese contemporary classical composer Tan Dun (谭盾). Corbett believes that Tan Dun's compositions reveal

> [t]he deep complexity of neo-Orientalist strategies [...]: an Asian composer in the West uses techniques devised by a Western composer inspired by Asian philosophy – the work is played for an Asian audience which hears it as an artifact of the bizarre West. Orientalism is reflected back-and-forth like a musicultural mise en abyme (180).

This musicultural mise en abyme is the intercultural position reflected in *Awaking* where the West is regarded as bizarre and the East exotic. The inclusion of white bodies chanting Eastern mantras extracted from their religious framework inflects the nodal positions of Orientalism and Occidentalism and refracts the static images of appropriation and counter-appropriation. In addition, Ong's instrument of creating a new age Fourth World is not, ironically, the sonic fusion of dichotomies achieving consonance but is instead a modernity located in the compositional structure of the original soundtrack performed. While the triadic interaction of cultural forms enacted, visually, a synthesis of sound and an intercultural soundscape of what can be regarded as a contemporary *chinoiserie*, it is in the listening to Qu's composition that a conceptual self-Orientalism can already be heard. Embedded in the structure of Qu's theme to *Awaking* is the site of an intercultural acoustemology for the composition is a modernism effected through traditionalism where Western art music elements of thematic variations and recurrence, musical motifs, tonal transpositions, chromatic shifts, and free atonality[33] characterize the composition effected through traditional Chinese instruments.

From Voice to Vocality: The Voice of the Female Other

Deliberating on musical interculturalisms, Born and Hesmondhalgh note that the process of examining musical borrowing and appropriation "is necessarily to consider the relations between culture, power, ethnicity, and class; and these relations are always further entangled in the dynamics of gender and sexuality" (3). The universals in *Awaking* are not confined to the thematic postulation of metaphysical conditions or performative ones; the processes of appropriation and counter-appropriation are not merely about ethnicity and culture but of gender and sexuality as well. In its privileging of the condition of the female subject in (and out

[33] This refers to compositions without a tonal centre. While it is largely believed that this musical principle was consequent of Arnold Schoenberg's 'Twelve-Tone' movement to address the crisis in tonality in the late nineteenth century, Chinese music has never regarded 'atonality' as a sonic quality to be avoided.

of) love in both tales, and the sonic prominence of female vocal ranges, the performance inevitably drew attention to the vocality and presence of the female subject. The distinct material and corporeal absence of the male protagonists in the production accentuates, dialectically, the immanence of the feminine body. While both plays, *Hamlet* and *Mudan Ting*, feature the male characters and their female lovers as fundamental to narrative development, Hamlet and Liu Mengmei are visibly erased. The women become the central focus in what can be regarded as an inversion and subversion of Shakespeare and Tang's androcentric tendencies thereby underscoring the gender agenda in the production.

One can remark, as well, that Ophelia is 'absent' in the performance and her presence revealed only in the songs of Act II ('Walsingham' / 'How Should I Your True Love Know' and 'Bonny Sweet Robin').[34] Yet Ophelia's embodiment is Lunn's voice and the trace of her presence identified through not only the songs Lunn sings but the grain of Lunn's voice as well. The voice then, emphatically, denotes the final moments of Hamlet's forlorn lover and carries within the grain the *signifiance* of Ophelia's tragic circumstance and state of mind. Any performance or articulation of Hamlet is absent and he remains twice removed from the production for his presence is actualised only as a refraction of Ophelia's mad condition; he is little more than a performative trace and an echo to the sublime tragedy of Ophelia. In a similar discourse of an absent-presence, Liu Mengmei, scholar and true love of Du Liniang whose presence in the narrative was, interestingly, a metaphysical spectre in a dream that became 'materialised' consequently because of Du's passionate pining and sincere devotion to this imaginary, is never performed and merely alluded to in the scenes Wei performs ("The Soul Departs" [离魂], "Pursuing the Dream" [寻梦]). These scenes, in the performance history of *The Peony Pavilion*, have been exemplars to showcase the *guimendan* (闺门旦) role, as was earlier mentioned, and for that reason the performative prowess of the actress. Liu is presence in absentia despite his central role in forwarding the plot of *Mudan Ting* particularly since Du dies after scene 20 of a 55-scene epic.

Awaking thus sought to depict a ' feminine universal' from the parallel conditions of Ophelia and Du Liniang not as lost lovers but as the female-other attempting to recover a 'real' identity that is not unmarked against masculine discourses. In their respective epics, both women's identities exemplify Phelan's argument that

> [t]he male is marked with value; the female is unmarked, lacking measured value and meaning. Within this psycho-philosophical frame, cultural reproduction takes she who is unmarked and re-marks her, rhetorically and

[34] These are the songs that Ophelia sings in Act 4 Sc 5, in her state of madness prior to her suicide.

> imagistically, while he who is marked with value is left unremarked, in discursive paradigms and visual fields. He is the norm and therefore unremarkable; as the Other; it is she whom he marks" (5).

Interestingly, the performance histories of both Elizabethan drama and Kunqu illustrate as well the unmarked positions of women on the stage. Though women played a prominent stage role in theatre from the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368) to the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties, often cross-dressing to play male roles, they were banned from the stage from the mid to late Qing period to the early twentieth century with males assuming the *dan* roles, the most iconic of which is Mei Lanfang (1894-1961) – a famous Beijing Opera performer who had the versatility to play both male and female characters well and whose name has become synonymous with *jingju*. It was not till the mid-twentieth century that women were encouraged to return to the stage.[35] Likewise women, in particular the lower social classes, were forbidden by law to be on the Elizabethan stage for it was inconceivable that the feminine self should be subjected to the 'performance' of a lowly trait. [36] In the politics of performance, women were consistently erased and represented only through the image of the male-other.

Song then seems to be one of the primary means by which both Du and Ophelia recover their (female) identities in the absence of their re-marked positions. Ophelia sings in her state of madness after she is rejected by Hamlet while Du lamentably intones her pursuit of an imagined dream-lover and the love-sickness that eventually consumes her.[37] Beyond the lyrical semantics that depict their conditions, singing and the voice are readily associated with the feminine in feminist theories; the act of singing accentuates their social positions. In considering the placement of the female voice in the cultural construction of both plays and by extension *Awaking*, one is then moving from 'voice' to 'vocality.' A female vocality implies, as Leslie Dunn and Nancy Jones purport, a shift from a concern with the phenomenological roots of voice to a conception of vocality as a cultural construct (2).

Adapting Kristeva's psychoanalytic analysis of gender divisions, Hélène Cixous and Catherine Clement note how song is the archetypal feminine discourse: "The Voice sings from a time before law, before the Symbolic took one's breath away and reappropriated it into language under its authority of separation [...] Within each woman the first, nameless love is

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[35] See Li Siu Leung, *Cross Dressing in Chinese Opera*. See in particular Chapter 2: "A Theatre of Cross-Dressing: A Revisionist History." See also Min Tian, "Male *Dan*: The Paradox of Sex, Acting, and Perception of Female Impersonation in Traditional Chinese Theatre." *Asian Theatre Journal* 17:1 (2000): 78-97.

[36] See *Women Players in England, 1500-1660: Beyond the All-Male Stage*, eds. Pamela Allen Brown and Peter Parolin. See also Thomas Larque, "A Lecture on Elizabethan Theatre," *Shakespeare and his Critics*. <http://shakespearean.org.uk/elizathea1.htm>.

[37] This refers to the two scenes from *Mudan Ting* presented in *Awaking*: "The Soul Departs" and "Pursuing the Dream."

singing" (Cixous and Clement 93). While the metaphoric lyricism seems like a rash generalization of women's attitudes to singing, it does suggest that singing, and the singing voice exist prior to language and the Symbolic, and is a means to 'reconnect' with and reclaim that which Phelan terms the 'Real-real' – the "sexual difference [that] is a real difference" (3).[38] There is, as Dunn explains, meaning in the singing voice and power in the voice-in-music (59) and the act of singing remarks on their 'unmarked' positions where the unmarked

> is not spatial; nor is it temporal; it is not metaphorical; nor is it literal. It is a configuration of subjectivity which exceeds, even while informing, both the gaze and language. In the riots of sound language produces, the unmarked can be heard as silence (Phelan 27).

In *Awaking*, the unmarked is not merely the women's silence but song giving 'voice' to that which cannot be said. In *Hamlet*, the songs presented in Act II encapsulate the affective moments of Ophelia's final appearance (Act 4 Sc 5). The songs resound with that which sanity can no longer articulate as 'language' or the Lacanian symbolic; they become "'document[s]' in madness" (*Hamlet* 4.5.176) testifying to a deeper sanity that is Ophelia's recovery from an unmarked position in her binary representation to Hamlet.[39] As Leslie Dunn observes of the final moments of Ophelia, the songs possess a "disruptive and invasive power" (50). They threaten the Law of the Father by excavating the subversive powers of sexuality and the feminine erotic. Ophelia is a "figure of song" (Dunn 52) and she recovers her feminine identity from the margins by mapping her sexual and psychological difference onto the discursive 'difference' of music (ibid.).

Unlike songs in Shakespeare's plays, which are appendices to the logocentric tendencies commonplace in Western theatre, the tradition of Kunqu emphasizes singing and song and is the primary means by which all aspects of the performance are communicated – from narrative and plot, to characterisation, and emotional dispositions. Even speech is delivered musically as stylised pronunciation of speech tones. Kunqu music is formulated based on the principle of *qupai* [曲牌] where "poetic passages are written in accordance with a sequence of tune patterns" (Xiao 21). Kunqu, it is said, is "the last heritage of traditional Chinese music" (ibid. 17) and Kunqu singing is "representative of traditional Chinese singing" (ibid. 27). The songs sung by Du are thus not afictional moments where the narrative action is

[38] Phelan, in *Unmarked*, attempts to show how the exchange of gazes in forms of cultural representation such as photographs, paintings, films, and theatre, have simultaneously concealed and revealed a 'real' that can prove that sexual difference is a real difference. Unmark seeks then to show how Western discourses, each claiming to be the Real-real, have done little more than to disable the possibility of a Real-real. See *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance*, 1-33.

[39] Laertes, in Act 4 Sc 5, calls Ophelia a "document in madness." See William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, ed. Harold Jenkins, The Arden Shakespeare, 4.5.176.

necessarily suspended, as in the case of Ophelia's highly performative moments of song, but are, contrarily, means to communicate the narrative; the voice in song is neither atypical nor extraordinary (where Ophelia's act of singing contains within it "a source of sexual power, an object at once of desire and fear" (Dunn and Jones 3)). However, Du's act of aestheticised singing situates her sexual otherness and the narrative further accentuates the vulnerable position of a woman in love. In the scene "Pursuing a Dream" [寻梦], Du sings of her encounter with an imagined soulmate and the metaphysical encounter which leaves her pining for more. She recalls his touch and caress, and the tenderness of his presence. Du's identity is thus realised only in the realm of the imaginary with dreams being the language of her subconscious. The dream becomes more real-than-real reflecting her own life as simulacrum. The erotic pursuit of the dream reveals, as Levinas reflects on the eroticism of the feminine Other, her identity defined by her role in the erotic economy of the male (Hutchens 146).[40]

Although writing about Western opera Marie-France Castarede et. al's [41] views on listening to the voice as the essential experience of opera is applicable to Kunqu opera for Kunqu prizes primarily the 'beautiful' (美, mei) in the singing voice and the location and embodiment of beauty in the artful manipulation of the voice. The voice is distinctly then "the locus of articulation of an individual's body to language and society" (Furman 303). Since both language and society are structured by codes of sexual difference, both the body and its voice are inescapably gendered (Dunn and Jones 2). The voice is, summarily, the site of gender disclosure even in Kunqu theatre.

The body and its voice, and not merely the emotional conditions Du and Ophelia share, are aspects of the universal advocate in the performance. Such a reading is further affirmed by the strong religious overtones where the invocation of compassion, effected through the mantra, sees its embodiment in the figure of the Chinese goddess Guan Yin or the androgynous Hindu bodhisattva Avalokitshevera. Compassion, regarded in Western psychosocial discourses as a 'feminine' quality defined in binary opposition to masculine aggressivity, is here materialised as the female soprano voice – that of Lunn harmonising the mantra, and whose vocal frequencies resound above the lower 'masculine' frequencies of the SCO musicians [01:07:20, 01:07:30].

The melody established earlier by the piccolo, which subsequently leads Lunn into the hybrid chant, in the opening movements of the final act, reinforces the feminist agenda for the tonalities produced by the woodwind piccolo, an instrument of the flute family, are often

[40] See Emmanuel Levinas, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*.
[41] See Castarede, *La voix*, Michel Poizat, *The Angel's Cry: Beyond the Pleasure Principle in Opera* and Wayne Koestenbaum, "Callas and her Fans" in *Yale Review 79.1* (Autumn 1989) 1-20.

considered 'feminine' though, recognisably, such a categorisation is a socially formulated one with little historical basis. Yet sounds are often gendered and eroticised reflecting the binarisms that pervade musical discourses and theory such as high / low, sharp / flat, major / minor. The high-pitch sonorities produced by the flute, associated with the higher tones of a female voice, lend themselves simplistically to a feminine subjectification as seen in studies in music education where there is a general consensus, or perhaps prejudice, that the flute is considered a 'feminine' instrument.[42]

The performance, as such, resonates with feminine overtures and locates the female voice as the sound of renewal. The impact is accentuated further with the employment of female archetypes whose cultural and historic representations have consistently unmarked their presence; the appropriation of history, as intracultural excavation, consequently transformed as postmodern post-dramatic performance underscores the feminine universal. *Awaking* becomes the interstitial space that gives voice to female representation from two different cultures in one parallel time.

While such an optimistic comprehension of feminine universals cannot be discounted, the conflation of conditions and corporeality – as the tragic circumstance of Du and Ophelia and the repressed voice of the female-other – neglects a phenomenological 'listening' to difference (in similarity). If "the acoustic and expressive qualities of the voice are as much shaped by an individual's cultural formation as is her or his use of language" (Dunn and Jones 3), then what is heard in Wei's vocal patterns and modulations, and the grain, does not possibly share a commonality with Lunn's. Universality, located in the voice of the female-other, is fractured by an akoumenological listening and an acoustemological reconception where the acoustemologies dictate an epistemology based on a phenomenological experience of sound. Though it can be regarded as a seemingly unsophisticated and naïve understanding, the distinctly dissimilar timbres, density and the 'grain' of Lunn and Wei's voice composed as what Barthes terms the geno-song – the purely sonorous, bodily element of the vocal utterance – engenders a unique pheno-song – the verbal cultural content (181-183) for Ophelia and Du respectively.

This encounter with alterity is reified by the visual text of the confrontation between Wei and Lunn in the closing sequences of the performance [01:07:39]. As a visualisation of the intercultural 'third space,' Wei, now as actor, descended from the inclined platform and strolled past the musicians to greet Lunn in an encounter whose significations abounded with, paradoxically, indeterminacy and overdeterminacy. While the directorial intentions of this

[42] See Philip A. Griswold and Denise A. Chroback, "Sex-Role Associations of Music Instruments in Occupations by Gender and Major" in *Journal of Research in Music Education* 29:1 (1981) 57-62.

curiously fleeting and confounding encounter can be easily overdetermined, one could assume this performative moment to signify, theatrically, the finality of re-birth and a meta-performance of the cultural syncretic 'third space.' The peculiar encounter is anti-dialogic and wholly ocular. Wei and Lunn exchanged intent gazes with faint smiles that could be interpreted as acknowledgements of a re-union of different universes fractured by time and space. They see but do not speak; they look but do not touch. As dramaturgical strategy, it connotes the parallel lives and accomplishments of Shakespeare and Tang Xian Zu while suggesting that singular encounter of culturally and geographically diverse writers in the time and space of the performative present where technologies of performance have facilitated what was historically impossible. The performative moment is equally a poignant signifier of the geo-politics of performance locale where Singapore's hybrid ethnic composition and cartographically 'centred' / 'in-between' position, befits the meeting and mixing of cultures, traditions, and art.

As a performance of gender(ed) narratives, the moment was one of female selves discovering the 'same' with/in an-other whose gendered emancipations are embodied in the new journey Du takes, motivated by the frequencies of a universal compassion; it signified the hybridisation of the transculturally juxtaposed fates of Ophelia and Du. The temporalities of fiction and history collapse in the single space of a performative moment where real and imagined differences are transcended through an affectation of the human condition – of lost love and reunion. More significantly, it was a performative celebration of the re-marked presence of the female Other in the narratives which have inscribed their presence as traces. Yet Wei's eventual separation from Lunn, a journey into the after-life performed as a procession out of the theatre, enacts a rupture of consensus. Ong notes, in the programme, that in spite of the parallel conditions between Ophelia and Du, Shakespeare's narrative ends with physical death, "unlike Tang's work where love goes beyond the physical and is imbued with metaphysical regenerative powers [...] it points towards the fundamental difference in the position of life and love by these two writers from different cultures, histories and philosophies" (Director's Notes, Singapore Programme). The final sequence presented a hermeneutic puzzle of dissenting and conflicting signifiers: the visual text performed a transitory affiliation but disrupted its harmony with deviation and evanescence; the musical text resonated, conversely, with universality and concordance.

An Ethics of Interculturalism: The Face-to-Face Encounter

Beyond the aporia of gender representation, the moment of encounter between Wei and Lunn is a moment of epistemic rupture; it raises an ethics of performing interculturalism and

advents what Levinas terms a 'responsibility.' In the rupture arises the conditions of a face-to-face encounter with alterity that is a first condition prior to language and the negotiations that the Symbolic order can give rise to such as any concept of universality achieved through an attempt at rationalising the Other. The face of the Other, according to Levinas, speaks to the self and is prior to any articulation of morality and ethics since both are discourses consequent of endeavours to rationalise what is already the infinity of the Other. Western philosophy, motivated by principles of rationalism, has always functioned as an appropriative mode where differences are explained with (more of) the same; it seeks to totalise as exemplified in ontology. Language is that which is a product of that phenomenological face-to-face encounter. If then, as Levinas proposes, "the face is a living presence, it is expression [...] The face speaks" (*Totality* 66), Lunn and Wei's face-to-face encounter 'speaks' of the infinity of the ethnic Other and the Other inscribed in the voice. It 'speaks' of an absolute alterity and an experience that is "pre-philosophical" (Hutchens 23). The overt and unequivocal differences – of culture, ethnicity, race, language, the body, and the voice – become salient face-to-face for therein lies the "intersubjective relation at a precognitive core" (Bergo, para 1).

The disruptive and irreducible act of seeing foreignness and Otherness excavates the debates of intercultural aesthetics for seeing face-to-face is recognition of a responsibility because one is bound uniquely to the Other. The face is, as Levinas explicates, "present in its refusal to be contained" (*Totality* 194) and it "resists possession, resists my powers" (*Totality* 197). This expression of the face

> opens the primordial discourse whose first word is obligation, which no 'interiority' permits avoiding. It is that discourse that obliges the entering into discourse, the commandment of discourse rationality prays for, a 'force' that convinces even 'the people who do not want to listen [Plato, *Republic* 327 b] and this founds the true universality of reason (*Totality* 201).

Seeing the expression on the face demands a response to the other person that engenders a question of responsibility of and for the Other. That first 'utterance' in intercultural encounters is an obligation to fulfill that responsibility as exemplified by the confrontation of ethnic and cultural alterity in this sequence; Otherness is inscribed on the face. Ironically, while the visual texts of the face-to-face encounter between both women perform that alterity that demands responsibility in recognising the infinity located in the Other, the aural text advanced an acoustic religious totality resulting in a confrontation between what is seen and what is heard undermining, at the same time, the dramaturgical priorities. Wei's movement away from Lunn and eventual departure from the dramatic space reifies, visually, the irreducibility of the Other

and a refusal to be contained by universals and totalisations. The soundscape echoed the contrary spawning a schism and fracture in the receptive intersections of seeing and hearing.

Acoustic Syncretism, Sonic Hybridity Or World Music Kitsch?

In its antitheatrical avant-gardism, *Awaking* harkened to the possibilities of an acoustic interculturalism – where sound and music could articulate a new vocabulary of the intercultural while other sign-texts seemingly falter. Sound is purported the new intercultural universal. Yet this search for a universal language in performance, where music is the 'food' of love, life and the after-life, was little more than a recurring European modernist anxiety now adopted by the Asian 'Other.' In that voyage of recovering acoustic universals, what World Music attempts to achieve as well, *Awaking* was a sonic shapeshifter that performed an overt Occidentalism concealing an auto-Orientalism. A deep listening reveals the shifting power positions of musical cultures in interplay as evidenced in the dramatic structure employed. This acoustic Occidentalism masked as universalism further accentuated the exoticism of the 'Chinese' self – as contemporary *chinoiserie* – for the performance upheld the dialectical binary even as it subsequently attempted to break it down. As Corbett asks, "to what degree is [this] 'Fourth World' a mere extension of [an] imperialist mapping of a fantasy space of otherness into the electronic telecommunications era?" (172). Universals, in music or theatre, are a priori simulacra of an exterior harmony and can be achieved only as a fantastic performative.

While the 'imperialist' positions are confounded in *Awaking*, the hybrid that is the performance of universals is marked by its imaginative and illusory quality, its experimental simulation. Theatrically or musically, visually or acoustically, the 'composition' did not significantly re-invent nor re-theatricalise the conventions of dramatic and musical form. It re-iterated the arguments of a politics of East-West polemics employing a formula already concocted in the genre of World Music though this, recognisably, lacks the theatrical element. Additionally, the production's transnational and transcultural history of touring underscored the exchange of exotic glances as stage display. As visual text, the white bodies performing Western tunes of an-other time became that which was 'exoticised' when performed in Singapore. In Edinburgh, to where the performance subsequently toured, the Chinese female body performing a 400 year-old dramatic form, and the accompanying Chinese instruments and instrumentalists, could have reified the iconicism of the Orient-Other. The intracultural trajectories – an excavation into tradition and history now regarded as an Other-world – intensify further the spectacle of exoticism for the antiquated qualities of Kunqu and Elizabethan songs, along with their creators, are consistently emphasised in and as the act of

performance. The ritualistic quality of the Buddhist mantra, decontextualised through the process of reinvention and hybridisation, was little more than a performative aesthetic 'made strange' as intercultural commodity. In achieving 'universality' on the stage and a brave new (fourth) world of acoustic interculturalism, history and historicity needed to become articles of trade as were cultures and beliefs. The precession of the mantra's 'aura' as simulation created an acoustic desert of the real. This spiritual simulacrum is metonymic of the condition of universality inherent in the production. Universality is simulacrum and exists in and as theatricality. Theatricality here is not conceived simply as, as Michael Fried does, false representation or fakery.[43] Rather, it is an existence as performance or as a performative act where the reiteration and repetition of representation characterises the 'theatrical.'[44]

The structure of quotations, employed by Ong, embodies the ethic of intercultural practices and World Music dogmas as well. Quotations, as a linguistic corpus, always already imply a fragmentation and dislocation from the source as well as a selective and predetermined extraction from the whole that often in turn essentialises and reduces the potential complexity of the totality. As Aubert observes of the practice of World Music, musicians need to subscribe to the rules of the game - they have to surrender anything that is too specific that exists in their own musical tradition and search for convergence points while developing all possible potential for spectacle. Often these result in the risk of cultural leveling (Aubert 55-6). The search for a unifying acoustic 'spectacle' resulted in a cultural sampling, akin to the digital sampling technologies that have facilitated the birth of the World Music genre, with neither dramatic nor musical context being completely represented nor understood. What was conceived was an acoustic musicultural pastiche.

Regarded as performance then, the cultural grafts of Western and Chinese instruments in convenient juxtaposition seemed an aesthetic strategy that was no different from the 'theatrics' of Lou Harrison who employed Indonesian scales and orchestras of Western and non-Western origin creating a composition of exotic make-overs, or Jon Hassell's 'Fourth World' compositions that fused Asian rhythms with Western structures mediated by electronic technologies. Recognisably, Harrison's compositional works demonstrated knowledge of microtones, common in non-western musical forms, and showed understanding of the tonal structures and performance methodologies of Javanese gamelan music; his most famous compositions were hybrids of eastern and western sounds and musical patterns with *Concerto*

[43] See Michael Fried, "Art and Objecthood" in *Minimal Art*. Fried infamously claimed that "Art degenerates as it approaches the condition of theatre" (139).

[44] This definition is aligned with the Anglo-American definition of 'theatrical' as opposed to the European concept as propounded by Erika Fisher-Lichte and Josette Feral. See Janelle Reinelt's "The Politics of Discourse: Performativity meets Theatricality," *Substance #98/99* 31.2,3 (2002): 201-215 for a comprehensive exposition on the contesting definitions of 'theatricality.'

in Slendro (1961) and *La Koro Sutro* (the Heart Sutra) (1972) being among the more memorable works. Yet, as Corbett critiques, Harrison advanced a universalist and 'globalising' project for he "mandate[d] a transcultural link between musics of similar hierarchical status and social provenance" (Corbett 166) by claiming that

> acquisition ought to be 'equivalent.' If Hadyn is known, then an equivalent court music should be studied and learned: Javanese Gadon for example [...] It will not do to extend from Beethoven sonatas to Bluegrass banjo; the social and intellectual contents are largely incommensurate (Harrison 255).

Harrison's socio-musical philosophy of 'class-stratification' reinforces Orientalist attitudes in no less ways than other attempts at cultural grafting. The possibility of a 'real' acoustic interculturalism exists, seemingly, only as an aesthetic function and consequence, theatrically or musically.

Differentiating varieties of cultural appropriation which is the sine qua non of the world music genre, Corbett observes that some American experimentalists such as John Cage employ sophisticated annexations of Other-sounds through a creation of conditions for musical events to evoke Eastern philosophies (which Cage is known to be heavily influenced by) and are not merely superficial pilferings. The resulting music may have little or nothing to do aesthetically with the original system but are no less aggressive in their appropriation. There are others, such as Henry Cowell, who engage in a more common intercultural appropriation through the extraction of cultural acoustic characteristics and the performance of a "musical contagion" (Perna in Cowell) – sonic imitations and a kitsch display of exotic styles.[45] In this contagion, Cowell neglects the specificities of the Oriental music he uses as sources of new musical inspiration and composition. In this 'generalist' and 'generalised' approach, he reinforces a cultural superiority, "defining and then appropriating elements [of non-Western music] that help him dislocate conventional European harmony and rhythm" (Corbett 168, own insertion).

Awaking lies in the hinterland of both appropriative territories where the utopian 'Fourth World' employs distinctly, and attempts to retain while adapting, philosophies in Asian performance styles. In its compositional reworking, it is also a superficial extraction of musical characteristics from dominant traditions to create a contagion of cultural sounds. The performance, as hybrid, is as much 'World Music' as it is 'World Theatre.' It presents a philosophy and belief, originated in Asia, as exotic framed by the exploitation of Western

[45] Cowell used this phrase to describe his composition *Persian Set* which was inspired by a visit to Tehran, Iran. See Corbett 166–173, for a discussion on Cage and Cowell's 'experimental oriental' music.

musical and dramatic structures and principles. The production attests, consequently, to the argument that globalisation of culture is not a synonym of the Westernisation of the world. Rather, there is, as Aubert recognizes, a reciprocal sonic invasion (53). "Cultural globalisation appears, on the contrary, like a vast and indefinite game of distorting mirrors, in which the other sends back to us the altered image of our transient identity" (ibid.). The attitude towards the inevitability of the prevalence and perversion of the culture industry and the schizophrenic conditions of cultural globalisation then is that which gives rise to the polemic positions both in World Music and intercultural theatre – that of hope and fear: hope for a utopian global village but fear of cultural homogenisation.

While experimental cross-pollinations continue in interculturalism and on the World Music stage, Aubert's query remains critical yet unanswered: "Is it necessary to sacrifice signs of identity on the altar of integration or to insist on retaining them in the face of exclusion?" (56). It is perhaps an apt question to ponder when designing what is termed an 'acoustic interculturalism.'

Conclusion

After Authenticity: Naming the Intercultural

The Problem of Authenticity & the Question of Tradition

Reiterating what is now considered a trite and even vacuous observation, R. Murray Schafer declares "we have no ear lids. We are condemned to listen. But this does not mean our ears are always open" ("Open Ears" 14). A consequence of divine or evolutionary origins, the "open ear" is perhaps the explanation for how we often fail to listen, and listen deeply. Bruce Smith attempts to provide a more scientific definition to what is a frequent linguistic distinction between hearing and listening when he claims "hearing is a physiological constant; listening is a psychological variable" (*Acoustic World* 7). The preceding chapters have sought to encourage a poetics of listening deeply, as opposed to a surface 'hearing,' to the soundscapes of intercultural performance and further establish a hermeneutics of listening structured by theories of acoustemology and akoumenology. Employing various frameworks and approaches that include, among the previous two, socio-semiotics, ethnomusicology, World Music theory, and cultural politics, the thesis has sought to address three key questions that Schafer denotes are necessary for the emergence of a sound culture:

1. Who's listening?
2. What are they listening to?
3. What are they ignoring or refusing to listen to? ("Open Ears" 14)

More often, the chapters have attempted to elucidate what is 'unheard' or not listened to in intercultural performances where musics and sounds of various cultural traditions are juxtaposed, adapted, hybridised and reinvented. By attending to the soundscapes and recognising sounds in contexts, the acoustic texts disclose cultural contestations and conversations occurring within each performance.

In attempting to create such a framework of listening, the thesis has predicated arguments constructed upon notions of 'authenticity' and 'tradition' in musical cultures, an authenticity defined more specifically as "an assertion that a particular music is ineluctably bound to a given group or a given place" (Radano and Bohlman 28). Such assumptions, recognisably, can be contested since "the concern for authenticity lends itself to a complex of metaphors about origins and their unalterability" (ibid. 29). As Aubert articulately expresses about authentic musical traditions,

> There has probably never existed a 'pure' artistic tradition. This 'myth' is just as unreal as the one of purity of race, whose fundamental falseness has been demonstrated, if it were necessary, by the perversion of its applications. Far from constituting fully preserved survivals of old times, the

> arts we consider today as traditional – those adorned with the most archaic appearance as well as those that appear to reveal modernity – are thus the products of multiple contacts and events, of convergent influences whose fusion was achieved through long periods of assimilation; and all this in proportion and according to modes determined by the particular needs of each culture at each period in its history" (20).

Such an observation about the fiction of the authentic is affirmed when a historical survey is made of the genealogy of instruments and the subsequent migrations of sounds. Court practices and instrumentations of Japan owe much to the influence of China; instrumental prototypes of Europe can be traced to the Middle East; scalar forms and rhythmic patterns of India bear resemblances to those found in Arabic, Persian, and Central Asian cultures as explained below (Radano and Bohlman 30).

By re-tracing the social and religious context of an instrument's evolution, the notions of an 'authentic' sound attributed to a culture of origin is easily contested. Many of the East Asian instruments mentioned in previous chapters share similar physical appearances, sonic frequencies and even methods of performance. The Japanese *nokan* (能管) is identical to the Chinese *dizi* (笛子) in form, colour and timbre. The Korean zither *kayagum* (가야금)and Japanese *koto* (琴) find their origins with the Chinese *guzheng* (古箏), and the physical appearances are alike with similar timbres. The guitar, often regard as an instrument archetypal of Western pop-rock music and believed to have evolved from the English lute, has a complex genealogy that betrays its cultural origins. It is, according to music historians, descended directly from the zither with one of its forebears being the Greek *kithara*. The form of the *târ* of Armenia and Iran (regions that formerly constituted a natural crossroads for human migrations) was disseminated both to the West and to eastern Asia. With the Silk Road facilitating the exchange of peoples, cultures and commerce, Asian lutes like the *dotar* ('two strings') and *setar* ('three strings) eventually became the Indian *sitar*. China, under the Han dynasty, modified this lute to become the *pipa* (琵琶). Towards the end of the Tang dynasty in the tenth century, this instrument migrated to Japan to become the *biwa* (琵琶). To the west, the ancestors of the guitar were the Arab lute, the *gittern*, the mandore, the cither and the Renaissance *viheula* and Italian *chitarra battente*. With migrations, intermixing, exchange and inter-change, the European guitar started to take a more definite shape and form, at the end of the fifteenth century, with distinct genres of its own. The transmigration of the guitar however did not end there and it travelled to the New World at the time of the Spanish conquest to eventually transform into the *jumbo*, *dobro*, ukulele, *najolele* and *mandolinetto*.[1] This

[1] See Rault, *Musical Instruments* for more detail on the genealogy of the guitar and other instruments 151-169.

nomadism of the guitar demonstrates Aubert's contention of a false belief in an 'authentic' and pure musical tradition. Musical cultures and music itself have always been displaced. There has always been a migration and intermixing of sounds, and the history of colonisation and colonialism adds to the countless cross-referential and cross-influential engagements within music. Michael Krausz furthers the argument when he notes how

> any given musical practice takes as music in a historically defined context, should not be countenanced as the privileged nature of real music as such, as if there were one ahistorical authentic pure nature of music to start with. Correspondingly the idea of music changes in its history, and there are no philosophical grounds for affirming that any one idea of music, entrenched within a certain musical practice in its history, captures an enduring and historically fixed phenomenon (1-2).

Assumed in Krausz's assertion is the belief that change is not antithetical to 'tradition' or 'authenticity,' and that it remains fundamental to music itself.

The complexity of determining, or even speaking about, the authentic extends to the question of tradition. Thus far, the thesis has postulated that interculturalism involves, often, a violent extraction and contextual dislocation – a violence that is not only a performative cruelty but also an epistemological one that threatens cultural traditions with its misrepresentations and shallow simplifications. The assumption located within such an analytical perspective is one of adherence to a cultural tradition (one that can be regarded as 'authentic') and its 'immutability.' Tradition is commonly (mis)perceived to be that which is not modern and remains 'pure' and unchanging across time. It is transmitted in a linear chain of inheritance and its practice forms the periphery of those within and those without. It is, in other words, "a specific inheritance of a collective phenomenon" (Aubert 16). The definition of 'tradition' becomes convoluted when applied to musical or theatrical practices for it assumes a stable set of knowledge, practices, musical repertoires of a society as "a coherent and identifiable cultural field" (ibid.) that has significance within their context and historical development. Yet 'tradition,' by this definition, is ambivalent and ambiguous at best for there is no singular tradition that is clearly delineated in any culture; there exist variations, alternatives, adaptations and hybridities. In intercultural criticism and debates on cultural diversity, the question of tradition remains at the centre. While, as Aubert notes acutely, "it appears intellectually satisfactory and morally justifiable insofar as it puts an emphasis on the respect of identity and the defence of individual cultural specificities" (17), the problems arise when one considers the limits of the domain of 'tradition.' "What is traditional and what is not? According to which criteria? And who is entitled to judge the matter?" (ibid.).

The quandary raised by valuing tradition as cultural specificities is further compounded when tradition is regarded as a "heavy weight whose effect is to crush individual freedom, or, on the contrary, a body of knowledge whose application can contribute to individual liberation and creativity" (Aubert 17). This is the conundrum faced in producing works of cross-cultural hybridities that return to an ethic of revivalism and 'preservation' of cultural tradition for tradition cannot be dissociated, as Aubert observes, from questions of identity, religion, development, race, integration or exclusion (ibid.). In 'calling up' the name of tradition in performance, its effusive ontology can silence possibilities of change, transformation and even progress with its hegemony that is granted by the term's inheritance.

The thesis acknowledges the impossibilities of authenticity and also recognises this ongoing debate in intercultural theatrical practice. It does not deny that 'authenticity' and 'tradition' have often been isolated as antinomy to adaptation, transformation, adaptability and diversity – conditions that, realistically, pervade all musical and performance cultures. Furthermore, the thesis recognises the hegemony of 'tradition' as discourse and its ontology that is ostensibly rooted in antithesis to progress – artistic or otherwise. As many musicians and musicologists alike recognise music's condition of mutability, its very nature as performance ascribes variation and variability as defining aspects of its performativity since every performance is singular and different from any other; every performance is an unrepeatable and unique performance of the score for music exists only in its performance. A notion of an 'authentic' musical performance is ontologically 'impossible.' Furthermore, to claim that cultural music is equivalent to the performance of traditional or religious texts and repertoires in defined conditions and contexts such as rites and ceremonies is also contentious for these (mis)conceptions deny improvisation as an inherent quality of cultural sounds. From an interrogation of the ontological nature of 'tradition' and 'authenticity,' both products of modernity's need to define and demarcate the here-and-then, the modern and primal, the secular and spiritual, it would seem that an analysis based on these notions is defective.

Yet to claim that cultural musical (or theatrical) practices are therefore 'universal' and belong to no one, or conversely all of 'humanity,' because of the absence of *the* 'authentic' and 'traditional,' is a dangerous proposition. Such a view regards the world as a shared acoustic (or artistic) space where free-floating sonic signifiers can be easily appropriated for various cultural, political or creative intentions and reinventions by anyone and everyone. This naïve perspective is a result of erasing margins, acoustic or visual, in cultural practices. Negating and denying 'tradition' or 'authenticity' leads to an imperialistic revivalism and cultural mining manifested as nostalgia for commonality and communality. Such an act propagates a neo-

humanism disguised as goodwill. There are differences in the sounds of different cultures and to deny these differences in a celebration of sound's 'naturalness' and permeability is to deny the ways in which music intersects with the cultural imaginary to create *difference*. Even though

> [m]usic is, one might argue, no more than a non-signifying, free-floating, essentialised object [...] to dismiss music as non-signifying is possible only when one ignores the power that accrues to musical practice. Music acquires power because it can be used to attribute and ascribe multivalent meanings" (Radano and Bohlman 43).

The power of music is the power of assuming and determining cultural meaning. While one may not argue for a singular authenticity where the performance of sound is concerned, there exists a *range* of possible 'authenticities' delineated by those who subscribe to the beliefs, philosophies, and those who comprehend the significance of the performative act beyond the surface sonicities produced. There is, as well, a plurality of variation and adaptations that form a collective of practices that have become identified with respective cultures. The ethnic voice exemplifies how races and cultures embody acoustic difference because "the voice is the most personal expression of individuality" (Rault 52). An individual collective voice expresses itself in the songs it sings and the memories embodied as music. Folk songs and ethnic songs form part of, and are, cultural memory. It is not only the songs vocalised but also the voice – its timbre, resonance, and densities – that demarcate a cultural self-identity. As Lucie Rault notes, "defined social groups who speak the same language, or are related in terms of physical characteristics, hold certain vocal attributes in common [...] it would be impossible to confuse with those of another ethnic grouping" (ibid.). The song of the Dreamtime is an essential thread in the social fabric of the Australian Aborigines who claim it as their own. The performance of song, as musical chant, incanted by a collective voice demarcates cultural memory and identity of which an ethnic community is thereby engendered and preserved. While what remains as an 'authentic' song of the Dreamtime today remains a contentious terrain for ethnomusicologists, the aboriginal voice in song indubitably materialises a cultural identity. A repertoire of songs, and the manner in which they are sung, constitute the distinctive mode of expression of different ethnic and cultural groups. A people's music "represents the united voice of a population, the summation of its past history, the particular colour of its inflections and language" (Rault 53).

From an akoumenological perspective, listening to the voice affirms the view that "bodily ways of knowing are not universal [...] but are shaped by cultural differences" (Smith, "Listening" 39). Such ways of knowing are not confined only to a listening of the ethnic voice

but sound and music as well. The reception of sound by different ears always already marks difference. Contexts and cultural-texts determine the quality of sounds, the performance patterns and the intended outcomes. While instruments may produce the same timbre or rhythms, what these timbres signify and how these rhythms beat in cadence with others differ in various cultural practices. Most significantly perhaps is the way in which the echolocations of meaning differ when these instruments are played to specified repertoires framed by traditional practice. The *dung-chen*, the gigantic telescopic trumpets used by Tibetan monks, summons dawn and dusk and is used in religious rituals. Its traditional (and religious) context is inextricably bound to the sounds it produces, the method of performance, and the instrument itself. Sonic meaning is derived from an intricate relationship between history, tradition, belief, performance, and performer. An extraction of the *dung-chen*'s sounds would not only fracture this intricate relationship, de-ritualise the sonic frequencies, but also render the instrument nothing more than an acoustic object. It is on this belief that the thesis has critiqued, in many chapters, the ways in which intercultural practices on the stage have appropriated ethnic and cultural sounds in what is little more than *affect* and *effect* rather than a performance of authenticities. While recognisably, many of these productions seek not to perform the authentic and the traditional, the flagrant misappropriations and decontextualisations result in what can be regarded as cultural pilfering. The transformation of cultural sounds on the intercultural stage are subjected to a post-modern 're-modelling' and surface play of pastiche; meanings, contexts and frameworks are dislocated, displaced, then re-paired and re-placed in new performance frames. While an acoustic intercultural performance necessarily purports new performance frameworks, many of which involve 'hybridisation,' 'fusion,' and 'cross-fertilisation,' the question that must be posed then is one of intentionality. Of what purpose are these cultural sounds employed and how much of the practice has been transformed for pure artistic innovation or capitalistic profit?

The same questions and contestations of authenticity (or authenticities) apply to cultural practices adopted and adapted for the intercultural stage. Like the music employed, the mise en scène of intercultural performances is composed of a collage of traditions 'defamiliarised' and made new. Arguments of Orientalist (or Occidentalist) appropriations prevail in the criticism of intercultural theatre. These appropriations lie not merely on a West-East plane as seen in the example of Mnouchkine's productions, or of Lin Zhaohua and Yukio Ninagawa's, but also of an intra-Asian plane where Ong's intercultural Shakespeares exploit Asian performance traditions to create new intercultural typographies – a new Asia for Asia. Regardless of the currents of exchange, similar arguments of authenticity and fidelity to performance traditions arise; likewise, the prevailing question of intentionality remains. Recognisably, culture is never in a state of an 'authentic' for it is invariably subjected to

manipulation and transformation – it is not stable but dynamic. Yet there are perceived coherences by those who belong to a culture, however amorphous the boundaries are. As Born and Hesmondhalgh write of musical exchange, a similar view can be established with regard to culture:

> There has been a long history of borrowing from and evoking non-Western cultures and musics. Commonly however, the main analytical issue has been the accuracy and authenticity of the appropriated material. (8).

While theatrical practices, like musical practices, are fascinated with the Other in the post-Enlightenment, post-colonial era of borderless communication, and seek to understand, empathise, and mimic in the hopes of creating a global(ised) utopia, the question of intentionality remains pertinent. Daryl Chin's observations about the process of interculturalism, and not merely intercultural theatre, seem noteworthy:

> To deploy elements from the symbol system of another culture is a very delicate enterprise [...] Forcing elements from disparate cultures together does not seem to be a solution that makes much sense, aesthetically, ethically, or philosophically. What does that prove: that the knowledge of other cultures exists? (94).

While one would not so readily claim that there is little 'sense' in interculturalism, aesthetically, ethically, or philosophically, Chin's contention reaches the heart of the issue in interculturalism in both music and theatre – intentionality.

World Music, World Theatre & (Sonic) Tourism

The concerns of authenticity and tradition are distinctly problems of modernity and modernism. They arise in an age of global travel, cross-border exchange and the dissolution of geographical boundaries effected by new media forms and technologies of communication. In *The Medium is the Massage*, Marshall McLuhan infamously claims that the primacy of human media has stopped time, erased space and sent us "back in an acoustic space" (63). This "global village" (ibid.), forty years on from McLuhan's proclamation, has seen new geo-political realities that further effect an effacement of cultural difference and an endless play of simulations.

While globalisation is commonly regarded as a threat to 'tradition' and 'authenticity,' it is ironically this very process that has generated the debates in cultural and performance theory. As Radano and Bohlman believe, "mediation destabilises those centers as it magnifies

the invented coherences" (32) of cultures. The 'authentic' (or 'authentics') can only exist alongside the re-produced, mass-produced, mediated and simulated. "The 'difference' of Othered sounds speaks at once to a new kind of mediated closure and the absolute fracture of prior coherences, which, in turn, inspire new imaginations of belonging" (Radano and Bohlman 33). It is, ironically, the pervasiveness of Sameness and this viral hybridity that has spawned a reassertion and restatement of 'authentic' and 'traditional' boundaries albeit these themselves being "new imaginations of belongings" (ibid.). An example of such reactions in the field of music is the genre of World Music. While much has been criticised of this genre as one being "compromised in market thinking" (Hegarty 136), the rise of this genre can be seen as a reaction to globalisation and in particular globalised, homogenised Anglo-American pop-rock. As Hegarty argues,

> World music is the attempt to spread 'indigenous' musics, musics that would authentically represent particular cultures [...] it also supports the specific musics it reifies, bringing them to new audiences and perhaps enhancing their status 'at home.' These audiences can, in turn, come to question their cultural presumptions about what music necessarily entails (136).

In a reaction that marks the reversal of cultural homogenisation, World Music has raised awareness about cultural particularities represented in and as sound and has consequently interrogated further the notion of culture and cultural boundaries. As John Corbett observes of indigenous musics in the global market today,

> certain of the Orientalist appropriations have long ago been reappropriated by non-Western agents and put back to use in varied ways. The move to disentangle 'authentic' ethnic music from its hybridised new-music forms can be seen as reassertion of the peculiar Western power to define (and preserve) 'pure' expressions of cultural ethnicity as opposed to their 'tainted' counterparts (163).

Such reactions, observable in the World Music genre, is certainly true of its parallel in the field of performance – intercultural theatre or 'World Theatre.' Ironically, in its smorgasbord of cultures evident in many intercultural performances, or its revivalism of exotic spectacle, intercultural performance has inevitability brought indigenous and often threatened art forms to the fore of global attention. Arguably, these attempts have in some (bizarre) fashion preserved and popularised what are often obscure and near-extinct performance forms (such as Sanskrit Kutiyattam). In the sampling of traditional styles, intercultural theatre has approached its utopian goal of an interconnected world revealed through art and performance. The hybridities that are the intercultural have undoubtedly also

illuminated discussions about cultural self-fashioning and identity while interrogating assumptions about cultural coherence and segregation. It has, to varying degrees of success, permitted a performative platform for dialogue and exchange where similarities and differences are further accentuated. The value judgements placed on these dialogues are however, of course, a matter of a separate consideration.

The arguments about World Music and Intercultural Theatre come full circle and return to the question of authenticity and tradition yet again. The insidious questions remain: how much of what is seen on the intercultural stage can be regarded and still is that tradition; how much of world music exists as indigenous? In the case of World Music, as Hegarty writes, the "culture-specific sounds spread and infiltrate each other, and usually combine with western elements, so world music comes to exist, confirming that the simulation is not a copy, but an extravagant reality with no real grounding" (136). Tradition is consumed to become glocal simulacra where the precession of the indigenous and the culture-specific is more real than the 'real' itself – it is a hyperreality. World Music, like World Theatre is thus the "new aesthetic form of the global imagination" (Erlman, "Aesthetics" 467).

'Authenticity' and 'Tradition,' in this global imagination, become appropriated for global markets in what Timothy Taylor terms a 'sonic tourism' (*Global Pop* 19). Cultural sounds exist today only as objects of tourism, subjected to the market forces of demand and supply, and refashioned to the tastes of the global consumer. These sounds and musics become

> increasingly disembodied from [their] modes of production, enabling new processes of consumption together with new forms of colonisation. Listeners may now acquire these recorded musics and give them specific, local meaning; yet so do they comprehend these musics within a global economy that provides, free of charge, matrices of meaning articulated, if not regulated and controlled, by the transnational institutions of mass-marketed entertainment" (Radano and Bohlman 32).

Cultural sounds and performance forms exist, ironically, because of modernity and globalisation's invasive power that herald or compel a commodification of culture. It is the demand for difference, in the 'ear' of a homogenising Anglo-American pop/rock music culture, that has permitted the music of the 'Other' to survive. Yet what remains is often 'updated' and 'revised,' often hybridised to cater to a wider audience that demands a more palatable consumer product that is foreign yet still familiar. In *The Manganiyar Seduction* (Singapore Arts Festival 2010), a piece conceptualised and directed by Keralan director Roysten Abel, the music of the Manganiyars – a caste of Muslim musicians who settled in the districts of Jaisalmer, Barmer and Jodhpur – is featured. The court music which has been

performed for centuries were seeing extinction till they were discovered by ethnomusicologist Komal Kothari in the 1970s, and of course globally 'exposed' by Abel's "union between contemporary theatre [...] and traditional Manganiyar music" (Programme Notes). What is performed are excerpts and a pastiche of Sufi chants, songs and classical tunes, fragmented as sample sounds and framed by a scenography of Amsterdam's red light district.[2] Distinctly an act of sonic tourism, the production has enabled a dying musical tradition to exist and become popularised. Yet what remains as the music of the Manganiyars is an issue of controversy. Along with the cultural politics of framing their music with windows from Amsterdam's prostitute dens, the production raises critical inquisitions about the efficacy and intentionality of such an artistic endeavour. Any attempts at appropriation for a consumer market necessarily incites a crisis of (cultural) ownership. As Feld most aptly phrases,

> Musical appropriation sings a double line with one voice. It is a melody of admiration, even homage and respect; a fundamental source of connectedness, creativity and innovation. This we locate in a discourse of "roots," of reproducing and expanding the tradition. Yet this voice is harmonised by a counter-melody of power, control or domination; a fundamental source of maintaining asymmetries in ownership and commodification of musical works. This we locate in a discourse of "rip-offs," of reproducing the hegemonic (Feld, "Notes" 31).

Intercultural theatre likewise is composed of culturally hybrid products appropriated for transnational entertainment and created for material consumption by intense global tourism and festival markets. Commodity capitalism, as Steven Feld purports, "promotes musical tokenism" (Keil and Feld, 319). In intercultural performance, it is not merely the cultural sounds that are 'tokenised' but that which composes the mise en scène. As pastiche where distinctions between tradition, authenticity, and modernity dissolve, the intercultural stage demonstrates the "loss of referentiality" (Born and Hesmondhalgh 28) and the triumph of a culture of the simulacrum. Often this culture reinforces the hegemonies of Otherness: power vs powerless, developed vs developing, modern vs traditional, avant-garde vs primitive.

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[2] The Manganiyar musicians are placed, either individually or in pairs, in individual cubicles that are stacked three stories high to create a larger box-frame. These cubicles have each the distinctive yellow bulbs that run around the perimeter of the frame making it resemble the fish-tank windows of prostitute dens in Amsterdam. A video extract of this performance can be found on *Youtube*. See "The Manganiyar Seduction," *Youtube* <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YvKsrqCwyGQ>.

Schizophonia to Schismogenesis: The Condition of Interculturalism

Schizophonia, as mentioned in the last chapter, is a term coined by Schafer to describe the separation and splitting of sounds from their original source due to electroacoustical transmission or reproduction (*Soundscape* 90). As Schafer expresses "Sounds have been torn from their natural sockets and given an amplified and independent existence" (ibid. 91). This pervasive condition of sonic reproduction can be attributed to technologies of simulation and dislocation. Steven Feld, develops this concept of a sonic 'split' further by describing how "sound recordings, split from their source through the chain of audio production, circulation, and consumption, stimulate and license renegotiations of identity" ("Poetics and Politics" 263). Feld terms this process a "schizophonic mimesis" (ibid.) and as he further explains, these independent existences of sound / music as recordings, though indexical of the place and people they contain and circulate, inevitability create new possibilities, through their material and commodity conditions, whereby a place and people can be recontextualised, rematerialised, and thoroughly invented ("Poetics and Politics" 263).

The acoustic interculturalism, as heard in the soundscapes of the productions considered in this thesis, performs such renegotiations of cultural identities, reinventing them as sonic iconisms. Cultures, and cultural sounds, are displaced from historicity and exist as articles of schizophonic mimicry, in many ways reflecting the postmodern schizophrenic condition articulated by Fredric Jameson.[3] This process however undergoes global market circulations that both distort and reify identities that are now more precisely termed as a cultural cosmopolitanism. The simulations of cultural identities on the intercultural stage assume added dimensionalities as they travel around and across invisible and imaginary geo-political borders interrogating thereby the binaries of West / East. According to Gilbert and Lo, this cultural cosmopolitical force is characterised by "openness to divergent cultural influences, as well as a practice of navigating across cultural boundaries" (8). It proposes not a homogenized society but one that "draws on the traces and residues of many cultural systems, of many ethical systems" (Hall, "Political Belonging" 26) and having the ability to "draw selectively on a variety of discursive meaning" (ibid.). What results in these travelling sounds and migrating bodies that 'draw on' the mimetic and simulated systems of (cultural) representation is a schismogenesis.

The current state of the intercultural is a schismogenetic one where, in practice, notions of authenticity and origin are discarded for an interplay of mimesis in which

[3] Jameson's observation of modernity's cultural schizophrenia has been explained in Chapter 5. See p. 182.

appropriation is that of mimetic forms. Schismogenesis, as Feld explains, refers to "the patterns of progressive differentiation through cumulative interaction and reaction" ("Schizophonia to Schizogenesis" 103) and is a term first used by Gregory Bateson to explain how cultural patterns undergo "classes of regenerative or vicious circles [...] such that A's acts [are] stimuli for B's acts, which in turn [become] stimuli for more intense action on the part of A, and so on" (Bateson 109). The interplay of actions and reactions reinforce greater intensity in what Bateson terms a complementary schismogenesis – a condition in which the cycles "mutually promot[e] actions [that] are essentially dissimilar but mutually appropriate, e.g. in cases of dominance-submission, succouring-dependence, exhibitionism-spectatorship and the like" (ibid.). The symbiosis is thus formed out of oppositional reinforcement. Using it to explain the conditions by which World Music and World Beat have become subjected to market forces which then exist as a condition of schismogenesis, Steven Feld believes that these genres have led to a blurring of boundaries "between the exotic and the familiar, resulting in an intertwined local and global product commodified in transnational popular culture" ("Schizophonia to Schismogenesis" 104). Traditional and ethnic sounds, in schizophonic conditions, have been repackaged for a culture industry which reinforces a schismogenetic relationship with the modern, creating a complementary relationship between oppositions of tradition and modernity, pop and ethnic, exotic and familiar. What results is a schizophrenic hybrid that interrogates the simulacra that is cultural production.

That which is theorised of schismogenesis in World Music and World Beat undeniably applies to its theatre cousin, intercultural performance. In this present-absence of cultural origin and 'primal' reference, interculturalism can certainly be regarded as a schismogenetic third space of neither nothing nor being; its presence as performance predicated on a neomythology of authenticity, origin, tradition and roots. This neomythology is conversely a product of global entertainment and market forces that in turn re-imagine cultural identities which inevitably feed the quest for universals and 'deep structures.' Interculturalism is thus liminality itself where the precession of copies intersect in what is a seeming reflection of the global(ised) state. It is in the intersections of these multimodal, multi-directional cross-currents that intercultural performance lies – in the liminality in which no culture can and could possibly claim as one's own; a space that does not certainly exemplify a universality of human culture or a universalism of performance forms but a third space of aesthetic spectacularity and surface play whose performative principles lie not in representing culture authentically but refiguring culture as a transitory mutable practice that can be constantly and consistently (re)invented. In a paradoxical fashion, intercultural theatre, like its musical counterpart World Music, is a mirror up to (modernity's) nature. Arjun Appadurai expresses this schizophrenic condition best when he notes how the world we live in today "call[s] for

theories of rootlessness, alienation and psychological distance between individuals and groups, on the one hand, and fantasies (or nightmares) of electronic propinquity on the other" (2-3). The problem of global interaction today, reflected in World Music and 'World Theatre,' is "the tension between cultural homogenisation and cultural heterogenisation" (ibid. 5).

After Authenticity: Naming the Intercultural

In what is agreeably a 'post-authentic,' hybrid universe, where ontologies of authenticities exist in a schismogenetic relationship with the simulated and replicated, the intercultural needs to be (re)named and re-conceived. If criticism (and this thesis) has explored the limitations of early interculturalism as little more than just a furtherance of an Orientalist trope in European theatre, or Occidentalist ones that ironically subscribe to the same auto-exoticism and neo-Orientalist trajectories, it is necessary to interrogate the concept of the intercultural and examine its accepted ontologies. To complicate this equation further, cultural 'purity,' as earlier discussed, is as much simulation for scholarship has also vehemently argued from a historicist perspective that conditions in the world have always already been 'intercultural' – it was 'intercultural' with the maritime revolution and certainly 'intercultural' when trade routes were carved on land (such as that of the Silk Road mentioned earlier).

In the light of these considerations, how is intercultural theatre then necessarily 'intercultural' and nothing more than an Orientalist revivalism or a showcase of exotic representation akin to the freak shows of seventeenth and eighteenth century Europe? Further, with global developments in practice having since evolved, progressed, and even reacted to, early European interculturalisms, complemented by increased proximity, mixing, assimilation and integration brought about by new technologies of travel and communication (with performances and performers circulating on the global festival circuit, and collaborations that now involve diverse national and cultural identities), is the term interculturalism, laden with its cultural political history, still relevant or applicable? Interculturalism, since its intentional practice as a performance strategy, has been merely an extension of Orientalist modernity in its many facades but has since seen transformations in the question of engaging Self and Other, and Self through Other.[4] In what is recognisably a global age in which the distinctions between Self and Other, East and West, become increasingly indistinct and where hybrids engender new hybridities, the term 'interculturalism' perhaps is now an absent-presence whose spectre lingers without essence. Perhaps the intercultural can be declared deceased in this "age of global performance"

[4] I thank Prof. Brian Singleton for this idea.

(McKenzie 6) in which identities of simulation and simulations of identities generate new schismogenetic cultural hybrids.

Recognising these prevailing complexities of discussing the intercultural today, recent performance scholarship has been attempting to shift the discursive paradigms by considering the term "interweaving" in place of the "intercultural." Such a redirection considers the effects of globalisation today and in the past, and the ways it affects the process of creating theatre cultures – "allowing for the aesthetic experience of successful integration and, at the same time, posing and tackling the question of how cultural identities are brought forth, stabilized, and destabilized" ("Home," *Interweaving Performance Cultures*). Led by Erika Fisher-Licthe and the International Research Centre, "Interweaving Performance Cultures," the guiding philosophy is an assumption that "processes of interweaving do not contribute to the homogenisation but rather enhance diversification" (ibid.). Perhaps this is the new horizon of the intercultural – where subject positions are recognised as autonomous and 'wholly' other. The success of the project will be determined by its ability to steer the analysis of cultures away from a semantic negotiation of the same cultural-political terrain where new universalisms are yet to be proclaimed in the celebration of those diversities. The diversities generate new homogenous diversities that are oxymoronically more complex simulations of what are now icons of a culture of tourism. Perhaps it is an appropriate time for intercultural discourse to deliberate, as Brian Singleton urges, "the isms we bring with us on our journeys, and whose modernity do we represent or refuse" ("Presidential Address" 16) in this "post-intercultural and globalist modernity" (ibid. 17).

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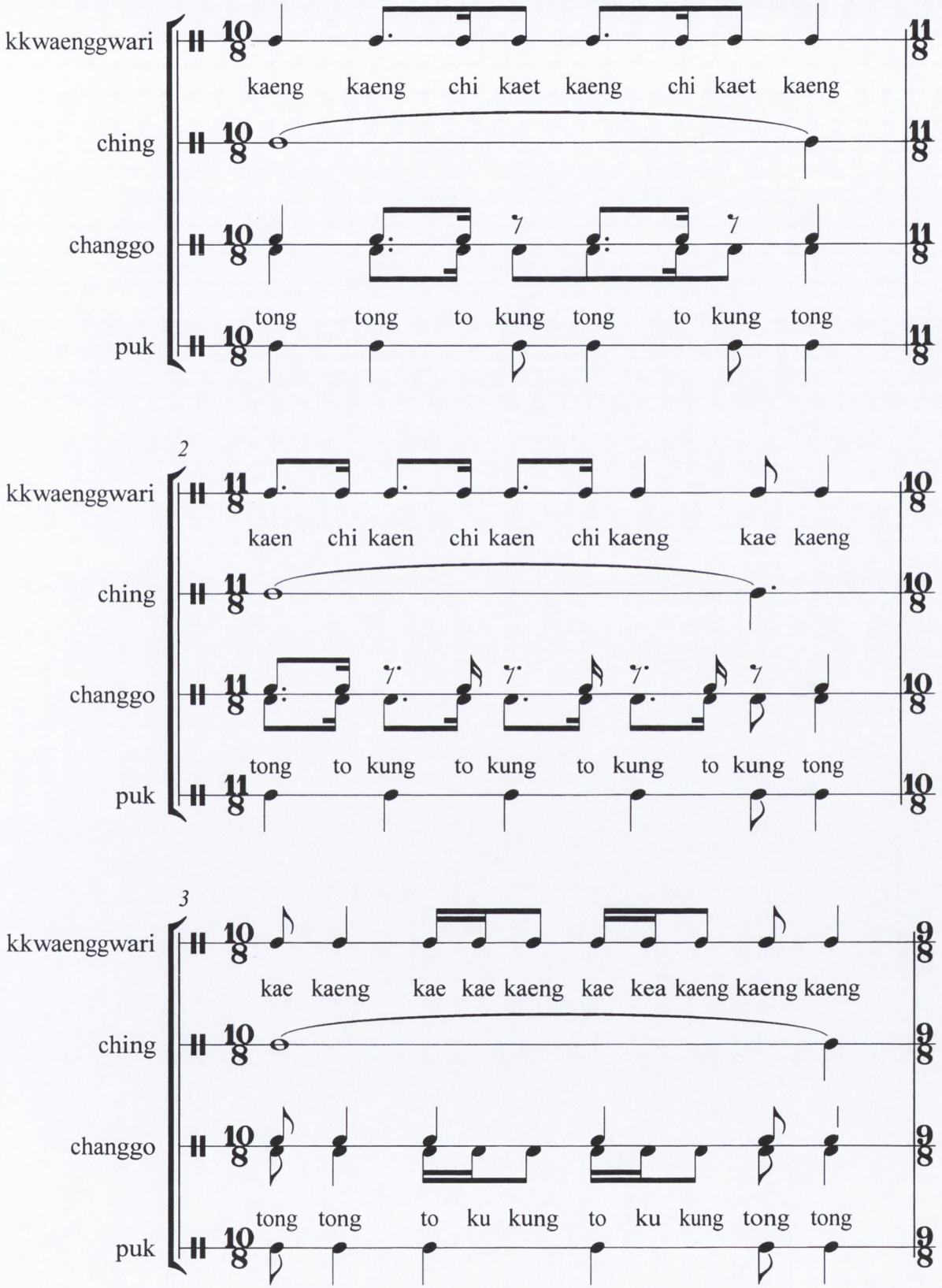
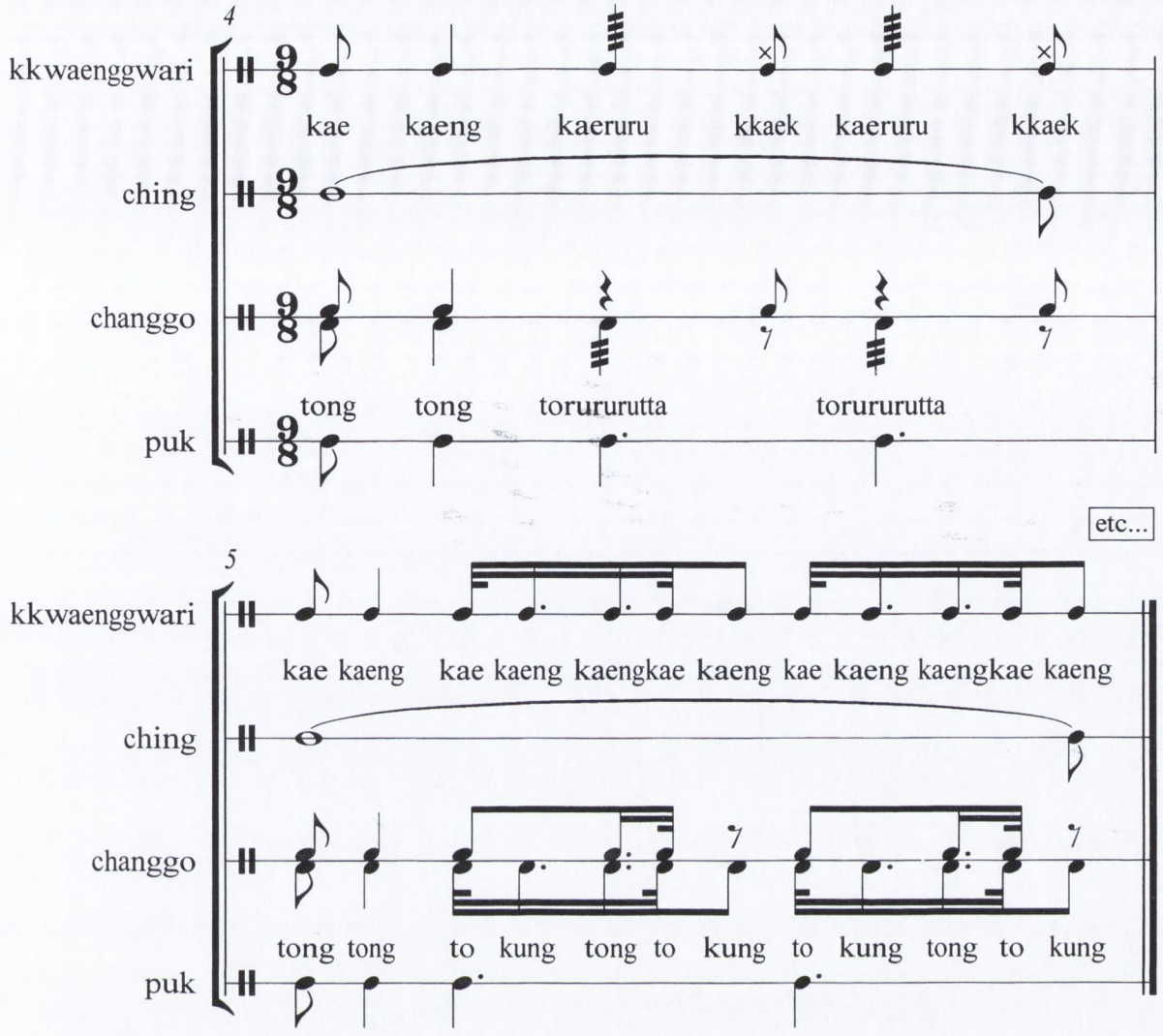
Appendices

Appendix 2.1

'Right Style' 'O ch'ae chil kut' Notation (1989 SamulNori)

Lim Dong-Chang Manuscript

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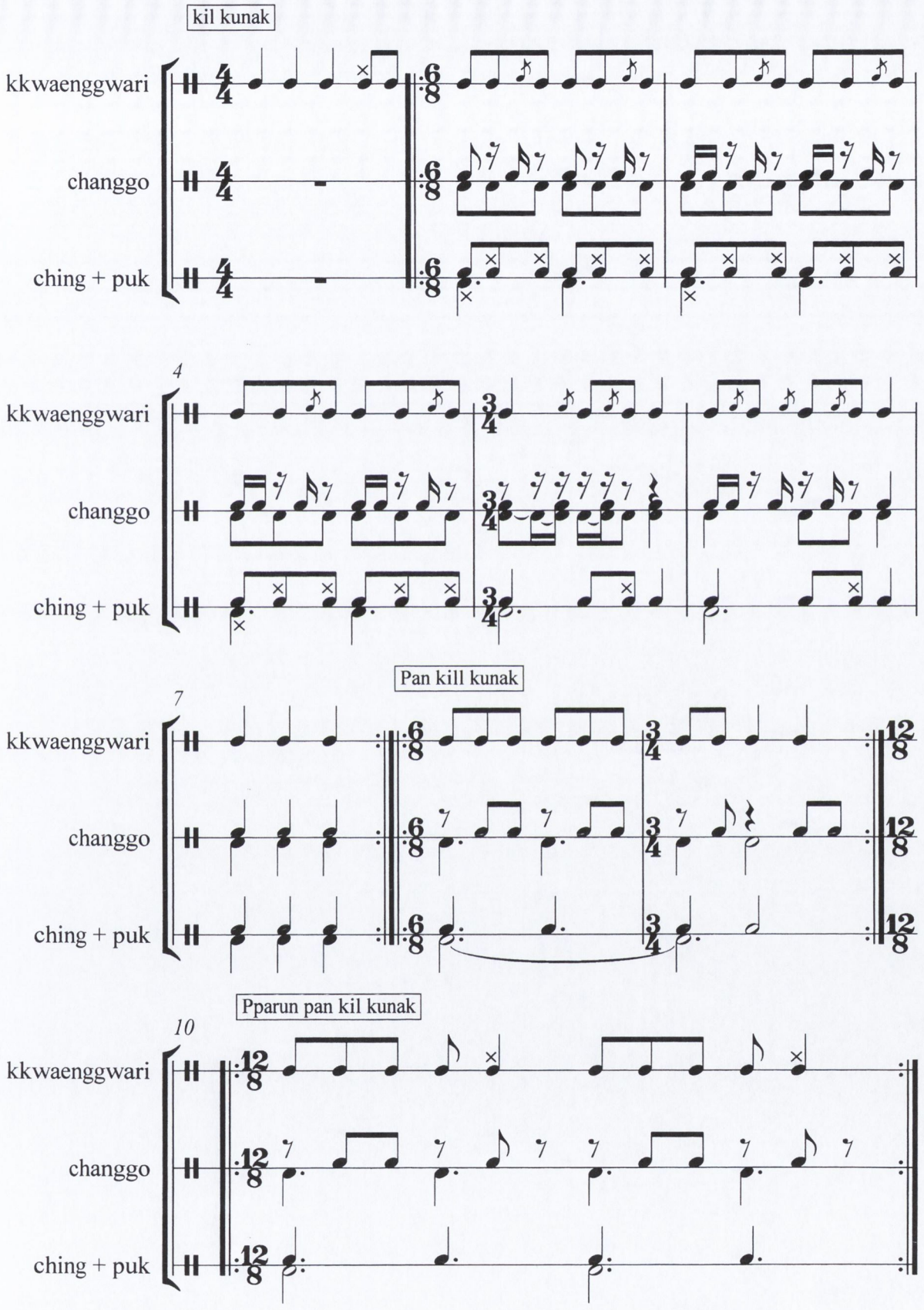
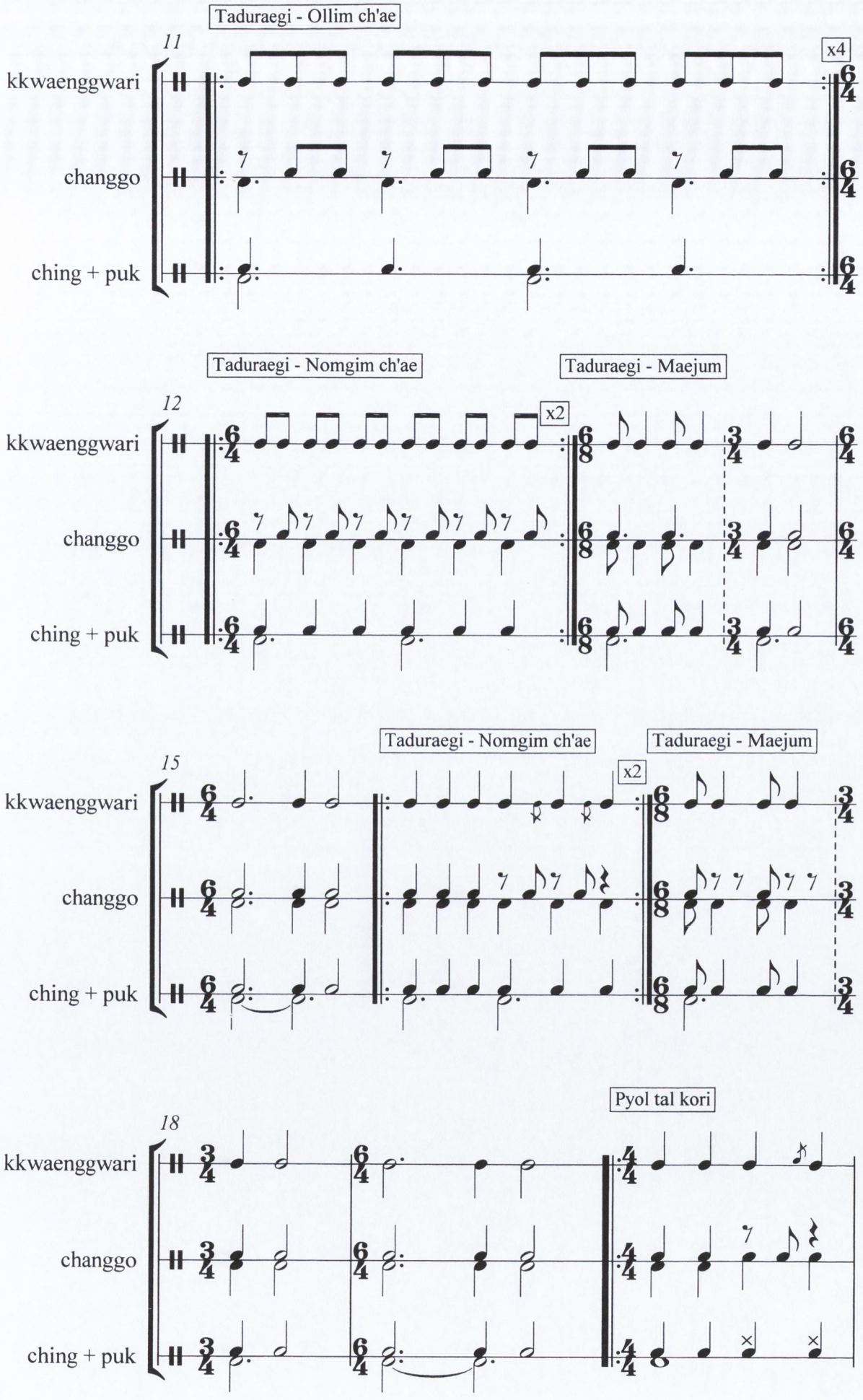
Appendix 2.2

'Yongnam nongak' Schematic Notation

Transcribed by Keith Howard

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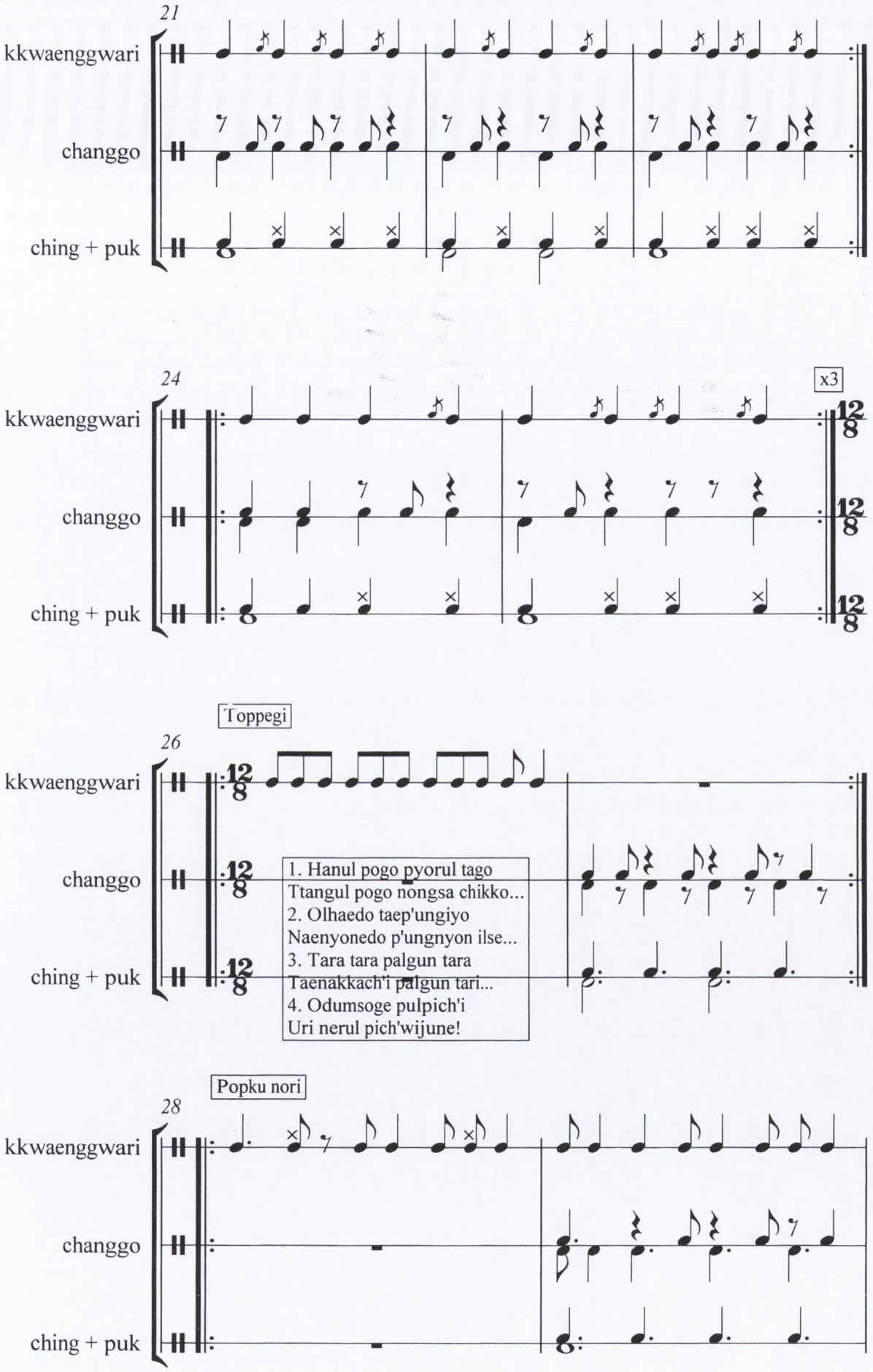
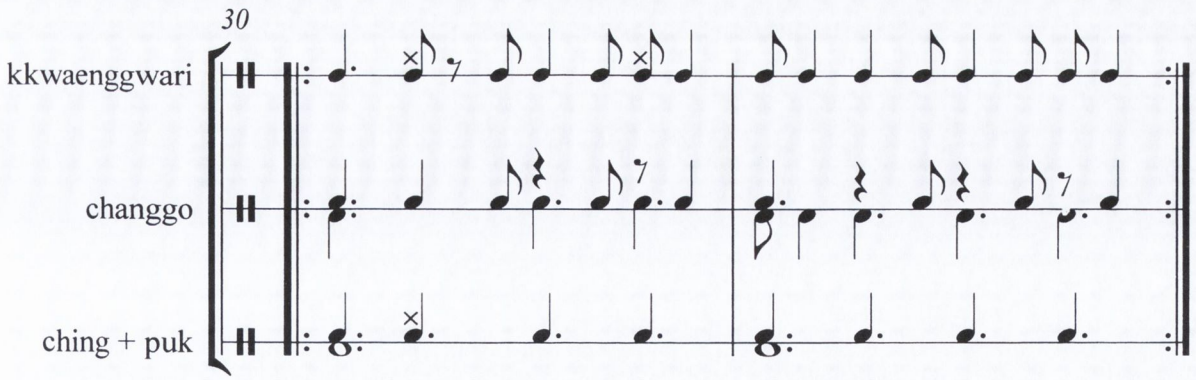
11
kkwaenggwari
changgo
ching + puk
x4
Taduraegi - Nomgim ch'ae
Taduraegi - Maejum
12
x2
Taduraegi - Nomgim ch'ae
Taduraegi - Maejum
15
x2
Pyol tal kori
18


21
kkwaenggwari
changgo
ching + puk
24
x3
kkwaenggwari
changgo
ching + puk
Toppegi
26
kkwaenggwari
changgo
ching + puk
1. Hanul pogo pyorul tago
Ttangul pogo nongsa chikko...
2. Olhaedo taep'ungiyo
Naenyonedo p'ungnyon ilse...
3. Tara tara palgun tara
Taenakkach'i palgun tari...
4. Odumsoge pulpich'i
Uri nerul pich'wijune!
Popku nori
28
kkwaenggwari
changgo
ching + puk

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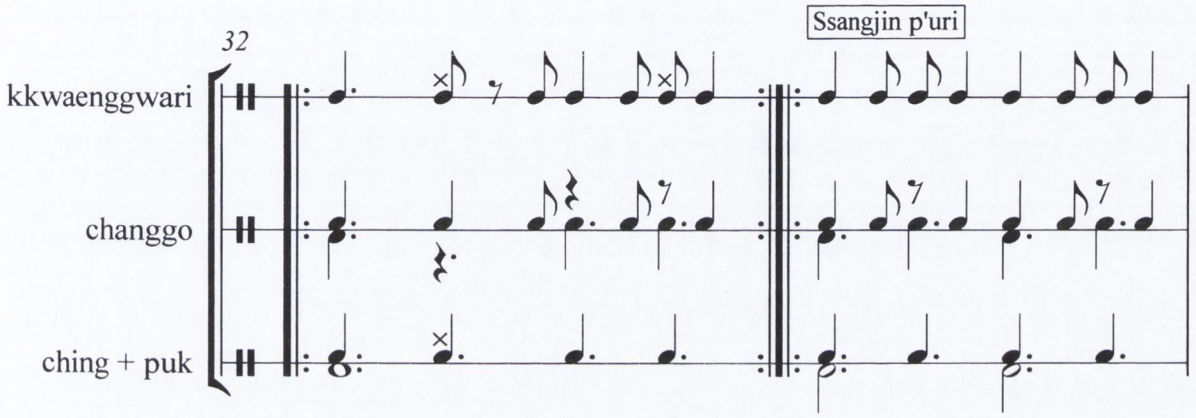
kkwaenggwari
changgo
ching + puk

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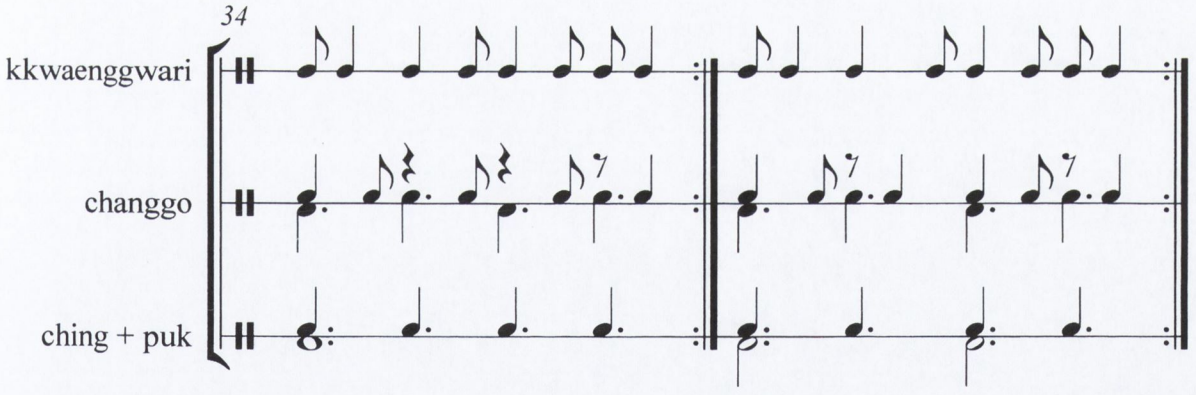
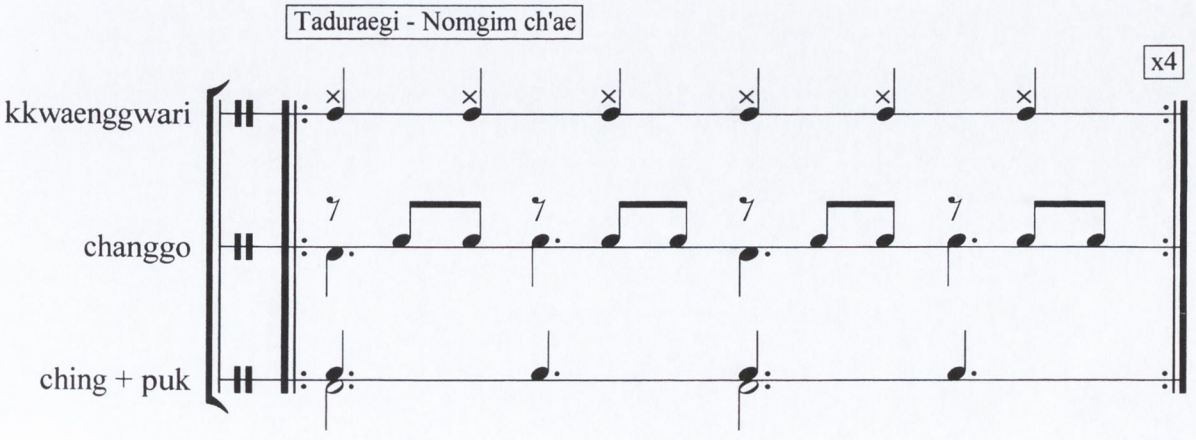
32
kkwaenggwari
changgo
ching + puk

34
kkwaenggwari
changgo
ching + puk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x4
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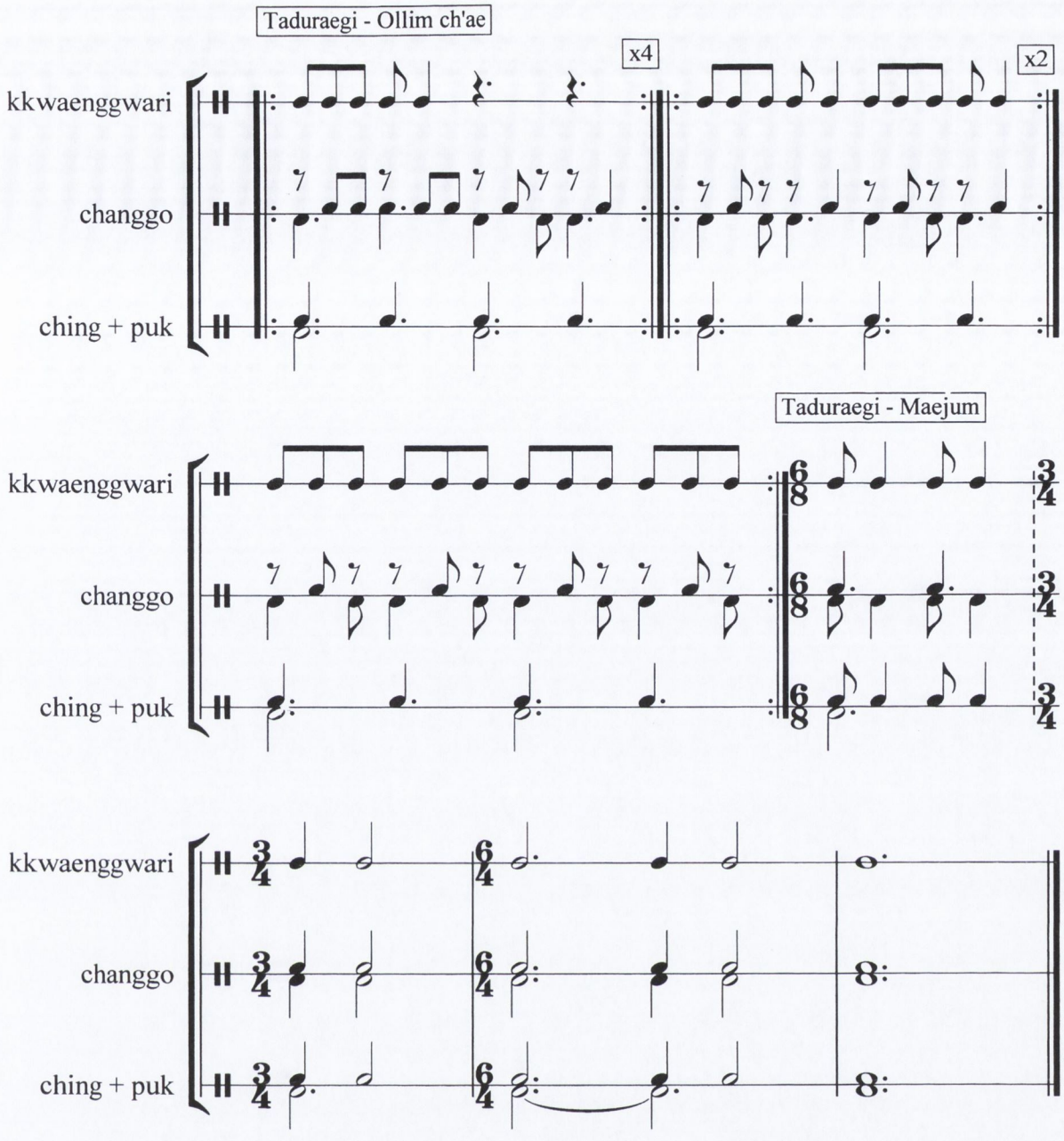
changgo
ching + puk

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From: "The Wall"

The Show Must Go On

by

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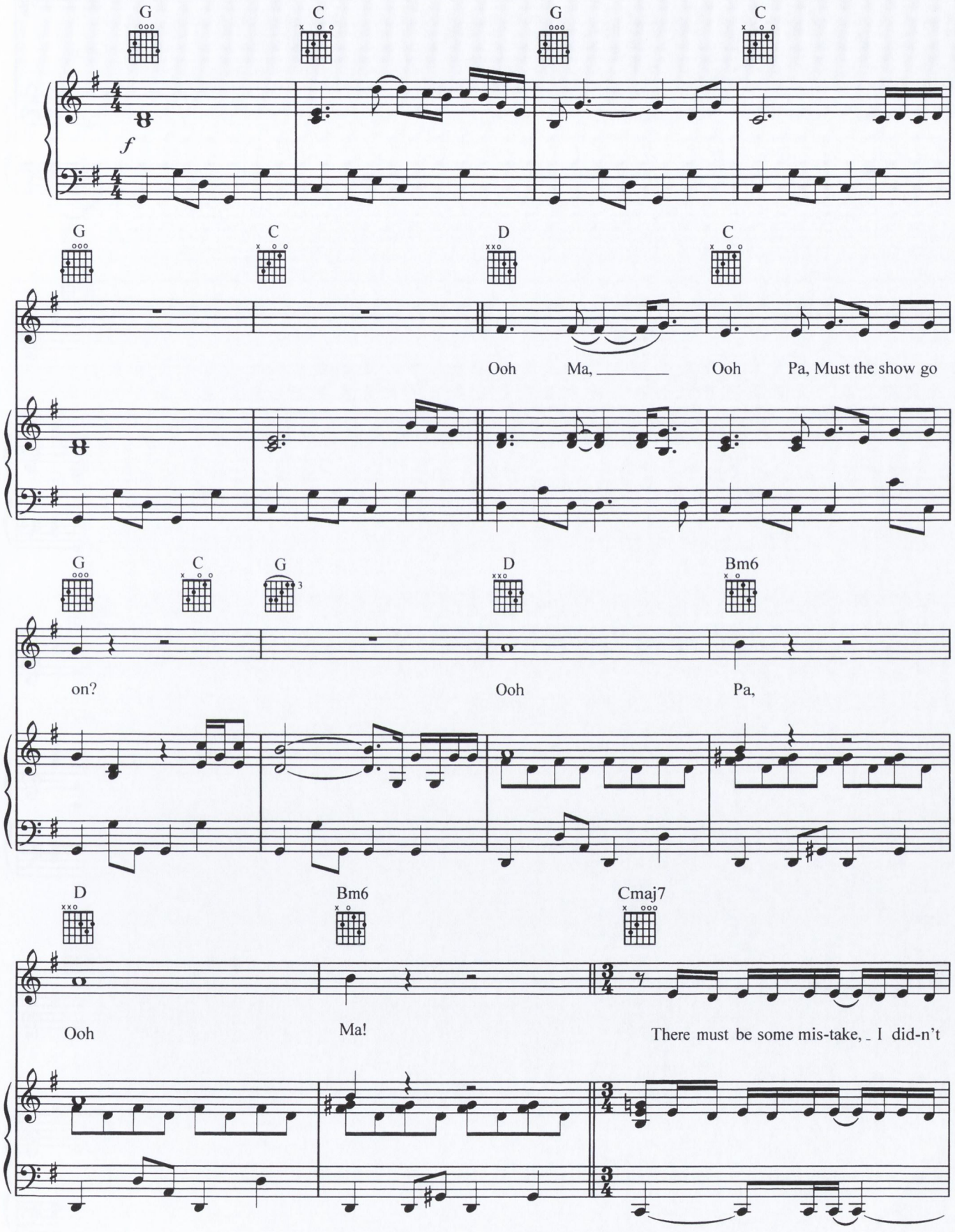
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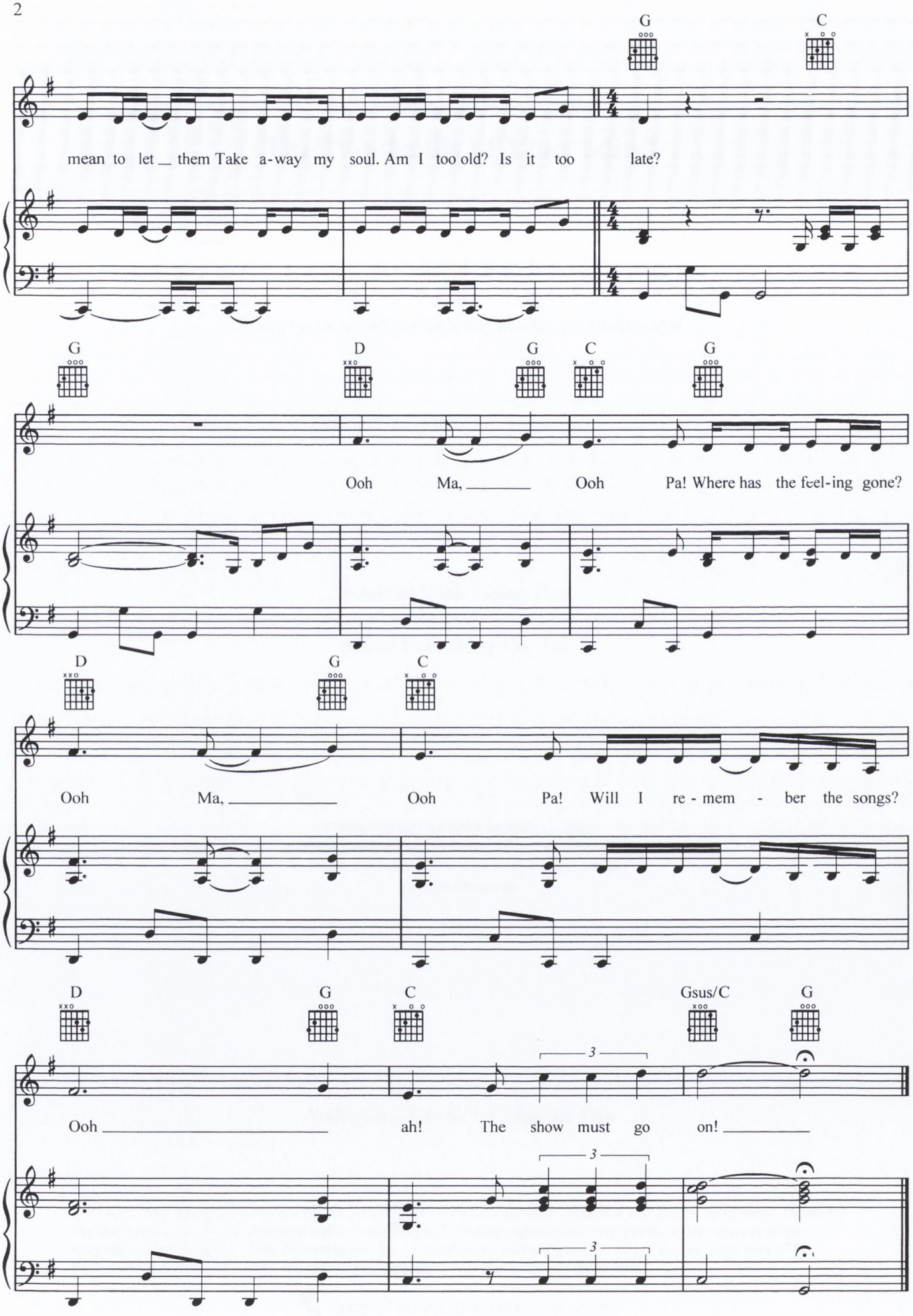
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From: "The Thomas Crown Affair"

The Windmills of Your Mind

by

MICHEL LEGRAND

Lyrics by ALAN BERGMAN and MARILYN BERGMAN

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Academy Award Winner

THE WINDMILLS OF YOUR MIND

Lyrics by
ALAN and MARILYN BERGMAN

Music by
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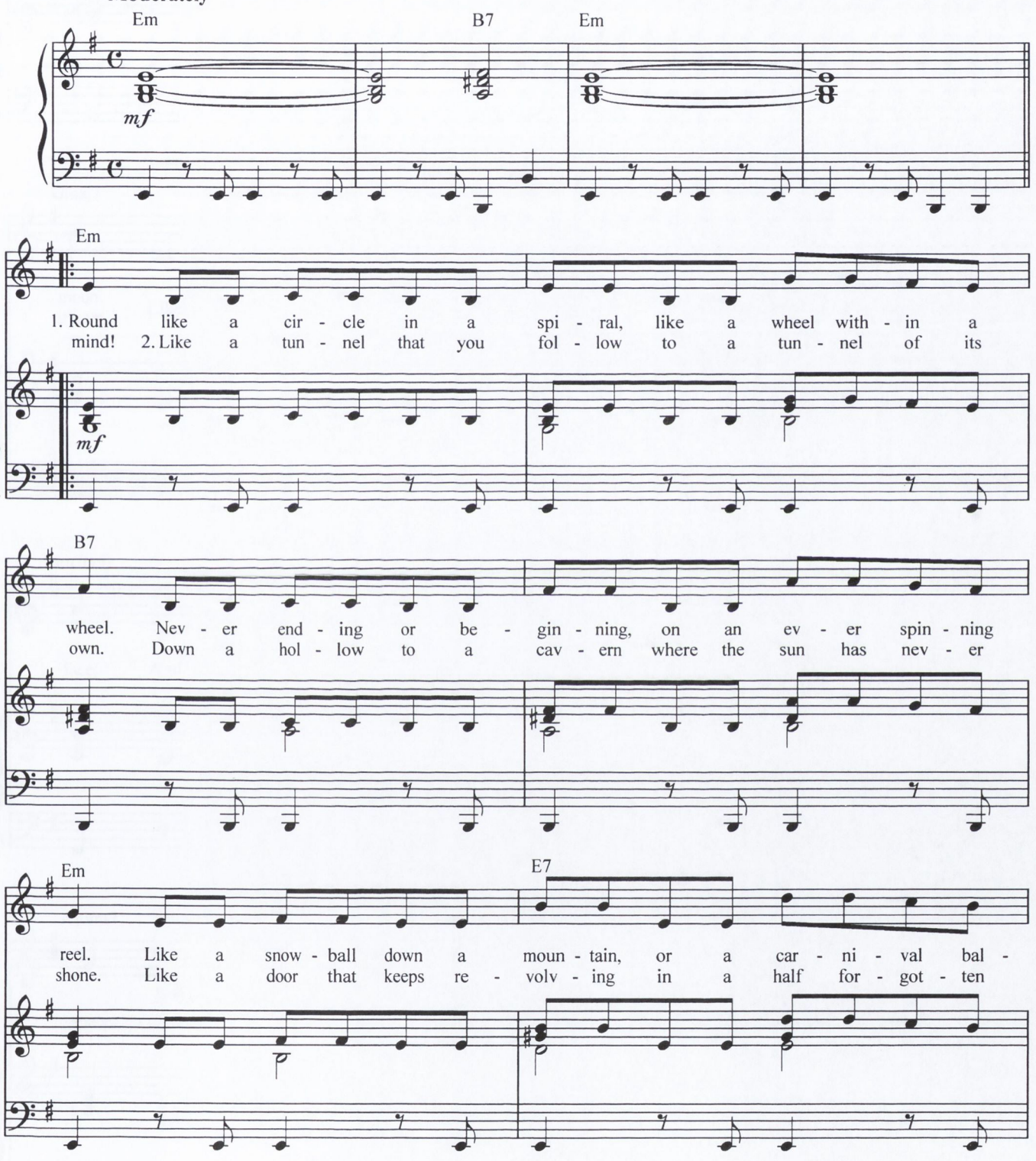
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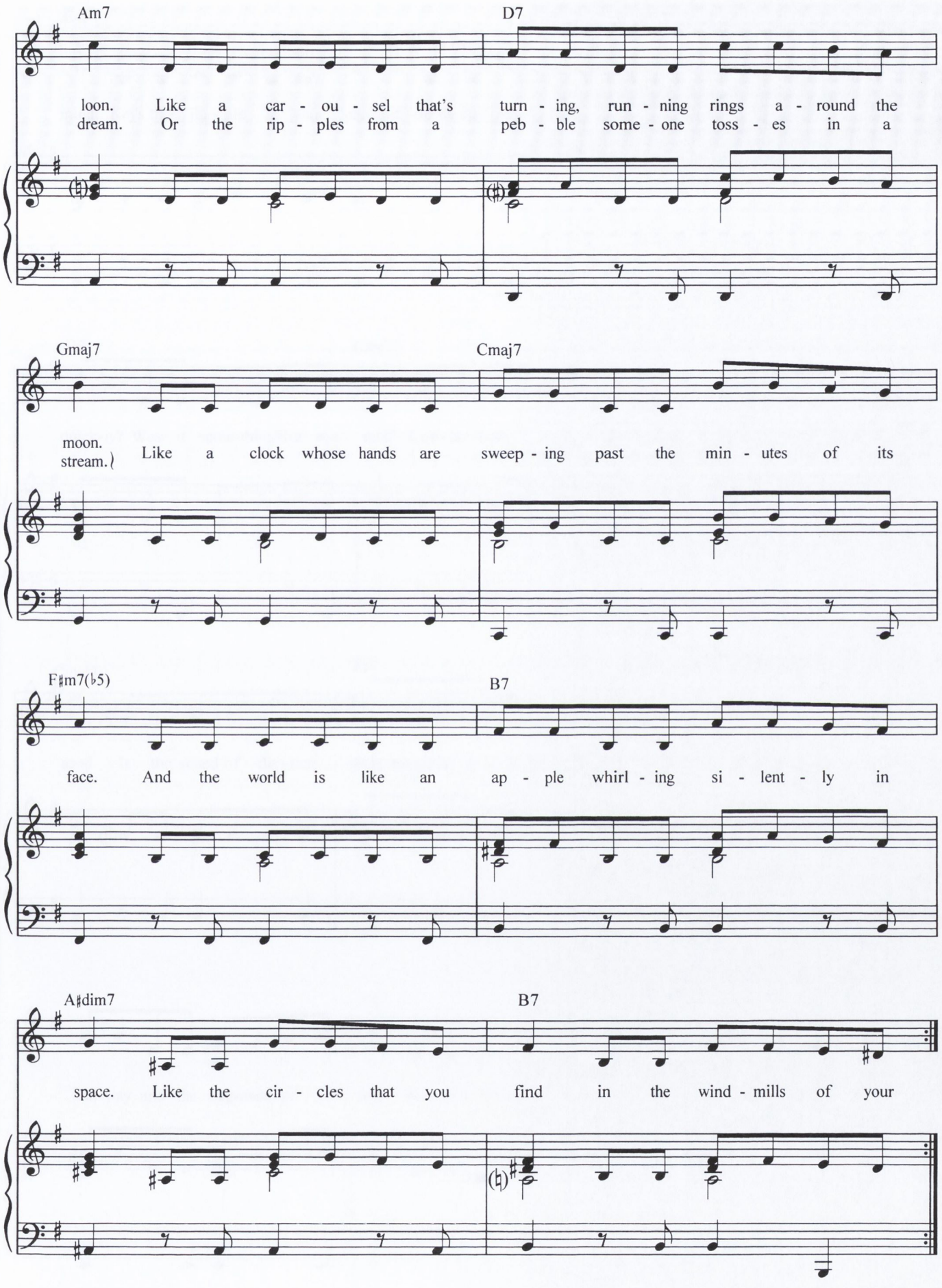
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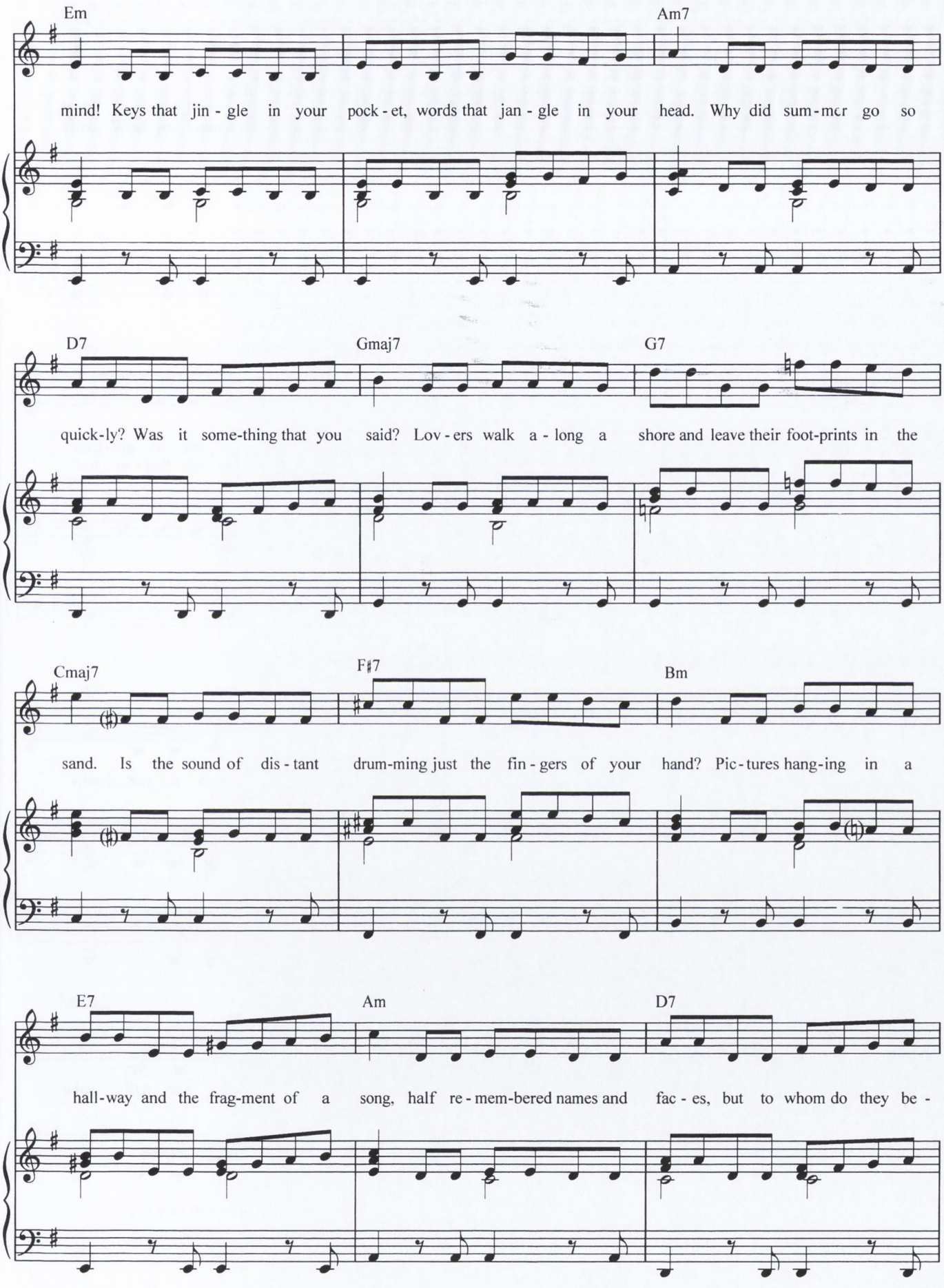
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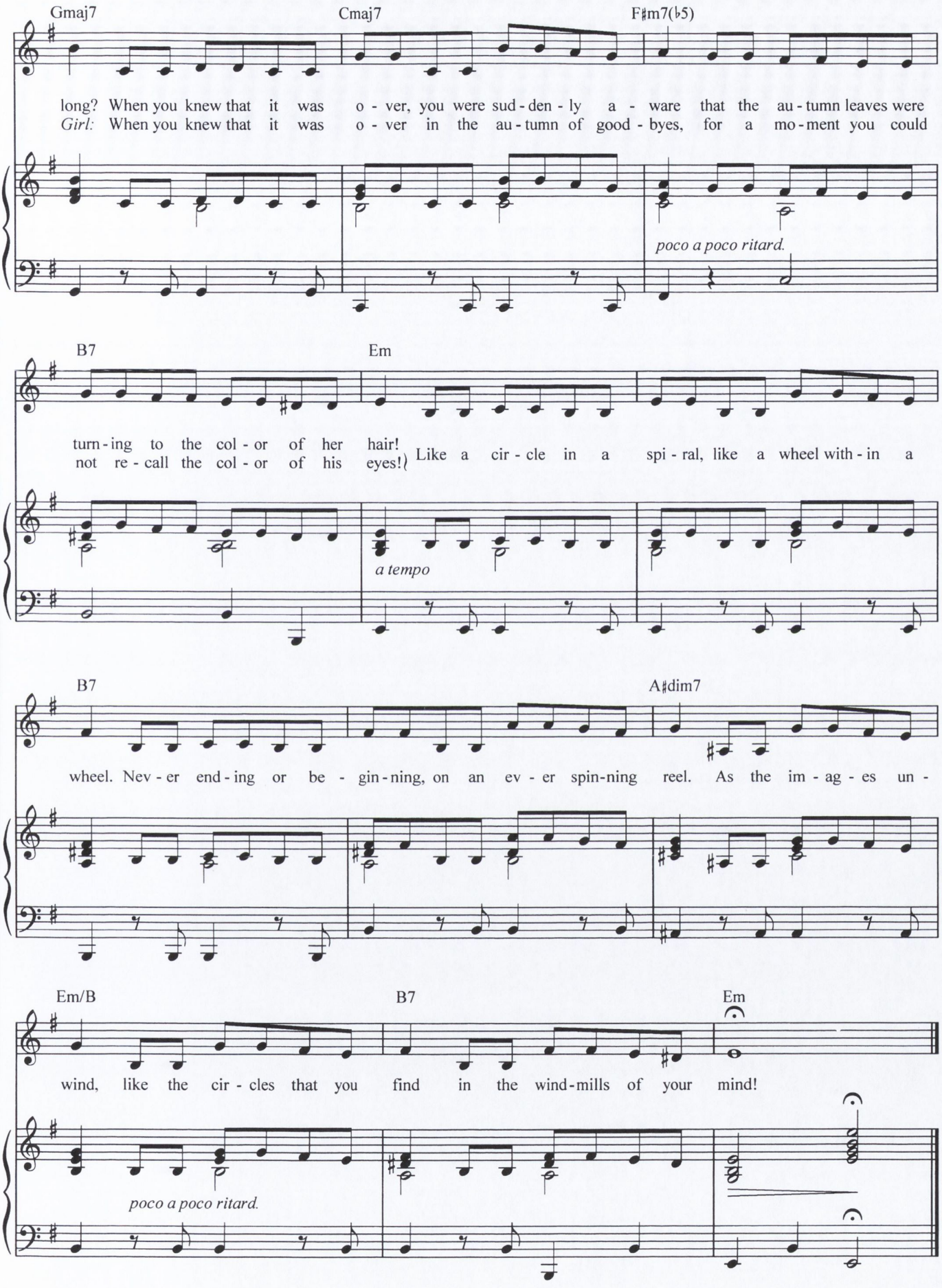
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Appendix 3.3

Windmills of Your Mind (1968)

Michel Legrand

From the Soundtrack of the *Thomas Crown Affair* (1968)

Round, like a circle in a spiral
Like a wheel within a wheel.
Never ending or beginning,
On an ever spinning wheel
Like a snowball down a mountain
Or a carnival balloon
Like a carousel that's turning
Running rings around the moon

Like a clock whose hands are sweeping
Past the minutes on its face
And the world is like an apple
Whirling silently in space
Like the circles that you find
In the windmills of your mind

Like a tunnel that you follow
To a tunnel of its own
Down a hollow to a cavern
Where the sun has never shone
Like a door that keeps revolving
In a half forgotten dream
Or the ripples from a pebble
Someone tosses in a stream.

Like a clock whose hands are sweeping
Past the minutes on its face
And the world is like an apple
Whirling silently in space
Like the circles that you find
In the windmills of your mind

Appendix 3.3

Keys that jingle in your pocket
Words that jangle your head
Why did summer go so quickly
Was it something that you said
Lovers walking along the shore,
Leave their footprints in the sand
Was the sound of distant drumming
Just the fingers of your hand

Pictures hanging in a hallway
And a fragment of this song
Half remembered names and faces
But to whom do they belong
When you knew that it was over
Were you suddenly aware
That the autumn leaves were turning
To the color of her hair

Like a circle in a spiral
Like a wheel within a wheel
Never ending or beginning,
On an ever spinning wheel
As the images unwind
Like the circle that you find
In the windmills of your mind

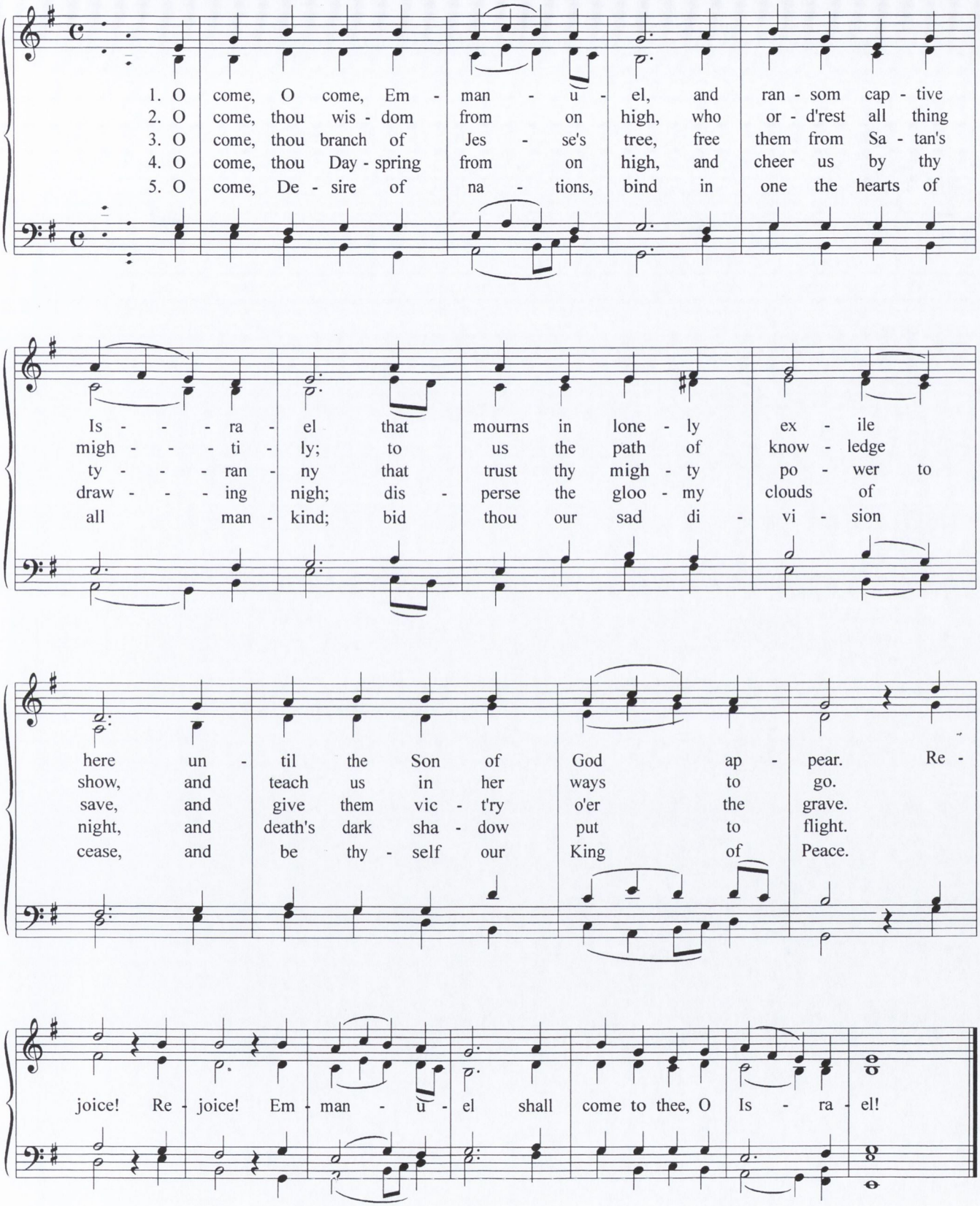
Pictures hanging in a hallway
And the fragment of this song
Half remembered names and faces
But to whom do they belong
When you knew that it was over
Were you suddenly aware
That the autumn leaves were turning
To the color of her hair

Appendix 3.3

Like a circle in a spiral
Like a wheel within a wheel
Never ending or beginning,
On an ever spinning wheel
As the images unwind
Like the circles that you find

ChristmasCarolMusic.org - free Christmas carol sheet music

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

words: Latin, c. 9th cent.
trans. John M. Neale

music: *Veni, veni Emmanuel*
plainsong, 15th cent., alt.