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Contribution

Music and Human Rights since World War II

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Abstract

How can the articulation of human rights politics be explored through sound, musical practices, and reception? This article addresses the intersection of music and human rights on a global level since World War II. The two authors observe that historians have already examined human rights from a variety of perspectives – such as law, society, and cultural politics – yet the expression of human rights issues in sound aesthetics has so far received little scholarly attention. Musicologists and sound researchers, on the other hand, have extensively analyzed the symbolic and affective use of music and sound on the part of social movements, cultural institutions, liberal governments, authoritarian regimes, and individual activists. Yet, the theme of human rights has only been explicitly addressed in a few publications. Against this background, the authors argue and demonstrate that an interdisciplinary analysis combining theories and methods from history, music, and sound studies can open up new pathways to understanding the global history of human rights.

Keywords

human rights, history, international relations, sound studies, cultural diplomacy, aesthetics

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I. Celebrating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights with music[1,2]

On 10 December 1949, the United Nations (UN) organised a concert dedicated to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) that had been adopted the year prior under the title "Resolution 217" by the General Assembly at the Palais de Chaillot in Paris. Designed to celebrate the first anniversary of the UDHR, the event was a splendid affair, held in New York's Carnegie Hall and staffed by a Who's Who in film, music, and politics. *Leonard Bernstein* directed the Boston Symphony for its performance of *Dmitri Shostakovich*'s "March of the Nations" and *Ludwig van Beethoven*'s "Ode to Joy". Former First Lady and then United States (US) delegate to the UN *Eleanor Roosevelt* and UN General Secretary *Trygve Lie* appeared on stage to hail the Declaration, as did the renowned British actor *Sir Lawrence Olivier*, who read the preamble of the Declaration, arriving fresh from a production of *Jean Anouilh*'s Antigone at the New Theatre in London.

The event was broadcast internationally, and it was by all accounts a splendid success. Most importantly, it was not a one-time gig. For the next 32 years, the UN would mount a concert in honour of the UDHR nearly every year. And almost every single year, the protocol section managed to invite high-level celebrities to read, sing, and perform the UDHR: conductors such as *Stanislaw Skrowaczewski* and the controversial *Wilhelm Furtwängler*, actors such as *Gregory Peck* and *Lauren Bacall*, orchestras such as the Vienna Philharmonic.

About a decade into this newly crafted tradition, the set-up of the concerts changed dramatically. In 1961, for the first time, the all-classical canon was abandoned in favour of a contribution inspired by South Asia. The programme that day featured an "Introduction to Indian Dances" performed in the General Assembly, which is not exactly a concert hall. In 1962, a group of Nigerian dancers took to the stage, as did pianist *Jose Iturbi*, hailing from Spain under dictator *Franco*. In 1963, the programme featured "The African Scene: Five Songs and Dances", performed by *Ivan Annan* and *Franz Tagoe* with *Rashida Abu-Bakr*, *Edith Grootboor*, *Hamza-Al-Deen*, *Francis Nyarko Cann*, and *Eva Kiritta*. In 1964, The "Frats Quintet" performed "Folk Songs of Jamaica".

This diversification went on for more than a decade into the 1970s. And while the available records do not indicate any one specific reasoning, it is highly plausible

[1] Note: Musical examples provided in the text can be activated by clicking on the respective link.

[2] The authors would like to thank Charlie Zaharoff for the careful editing of this paper. Many thanks to *Ian Giacondo* for commenting on and proofreading this paper. A hearty note of thanks for reading earlier drafts to *Rebekah Ahrendt* (U. Utrecht, NL), *Gertud Pickhan* (FU Berlin, GER), *Rashida Braggs* (Williams College, USA), *Esteban Buch* (EHESS, Paris, FR), *Nicholas Cull* (USC, USA), *Ernesto Donas* (U. República, Montevideo, UY), *Anaïs Fléchet* (U. Versailles, FR), *Danielle Fosler-Lussier* (Ohio State U, Columbus), *Philippe Gumplowicz* (U. Évry-Val d'Essonne-Paris Saclay, FR), *James Loeffler* (U. Virginia, USA), *Samuel Moyn* (Yale U., USA), *Marcos Napolitano* (U. São Paulo, BR), *Violeta Nigrita de Gunta* (Paris EHESS, FR / U. National de Quilmes, ARG), *Ronald Radano* (U. Wisconsin, USA), *Anne Shreffler* (Harvard U., USA), *Tanja Börzel* & *Michael Zürn* (SCRIPTS FU Berlin, GER). This project was funded by the Cluster of Excellence 'Contestations of the Liberal Script' (EXC 20555, Project-ID: 390715649), as well as the individual Research Project 'The Quest for Harmony: Classical Music, Emotion, and the Discourse on Human Rights in the United States since World War II' (eBer-24-49679), both funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG, German Research Foundation).

that the recorded transformation took place due to the intervention of actors and participants outside of Western liberal states – within and outside of the assembly. The papers of the protocol section of the UN archives in New York City do not yield any information on the motivation behind the shift. However, the files of the UN Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR) and the UN Human Rights Council in New York, Paris, and Geneva appear to be more vocal on this point.

More importantly, the story does not end there. In the late 1970s, this diversity subsided, and in the early 1980s, UDHR programmes vanished altogether. There were attempts to resuscitate the venture in the 1990s, but these efforts were, for the most part, "classical", very much along the lines of what these concerts once had been in the 1940s and 1950s. In 1998, *Luciano Pavarotti* sang his heart out at the 50th anniversary of the UDHR. Since 2008, *Daniel Barenboim* has twice mounted UDHR anniversary concerts at the UN in Geneva.[3]

How do we make sense of this story in the context of human rights, music, and international relations? What does it mean that programmes and actors changed so radically and overnight, back and forth, over the course of more than thirty years? This essay aims to outline a framework for a more in-depth examination of the sounds of human rights, both targeted at this specific case study as well as for the study of sound and rights in general. More specifically, we suggest an avenue of research to expand the focus from verbal to nonverbal and from the sociopolitical to the aesthetic dimension of human rights activism.

II. The sounds of human rights

On a general level, the story outlined in the UDHR case raises the question of what human rights may sound like. Is there a sound of human rights? To what extent can we reconstruct its history through music? Do sounds have something to tell us about sociopolitical momenta, orders, and developments? Can we "hear" human rights history, political and otherwise? Curiously, both social scientists and scholars from the field of music have been notoriously reluctant to address these questions in tandem. Indeed, not much seems to have changed since *Jeffrey Jackson* and *Stanley Pelkey* opened their 2005 collection, Music and History: Bridging the Disciplines, by asking, "Why haven't historians and musicologists been talking to one another?"[4] At the time, the two authors offered a simple diagnosis: a problem of communication, notably in regard to the specific methods, knowledge, and skills prevalent in each respective discipline. Historians, for instance, seemed to believe that one needed to be able to read, play, or even like music to make sense of it historically.

Taking *Jackson* and *Pelkey* as a point of departure, this paper seeks to formulate answers to the general questions that emerge from our examination of the UDHR case, considering the transdisciplinary collaboration between musical and historical

[3] *Jessica Gienow-Hecht*, Ode to What? The Human Rights Concerts at the United Nations since 1949 (Deutscher Historikertag, Leipzig, 21 September 2023), unpublished.

[4] *Jeffrey Jackson/Stanley Pelkey*, Introduction, in: Jeffrey Jackson/Stanley Pelkey (eds.), Music and History. Bridging the Disciplines, 2005, pp. vii–xviii.

scholarship. The aim is to locate novel epistemological and methodological avenues by inviting research on music into an intimate dialogue with history concerning the history of human rights, an exceptionally polysemic concept and, as an ideal, one that has been highly influential since the Second World War around the entire globe. Thus, human rights may serve as a topic from which to tackle these general questions through a more specific focus: Why, where, how, and by whom were issues of human rights transregionally articulated, distributed, and challenged through musical means and sound across genres and regions over the course of the second half of the twentieth century? The paper builds on the central hypothesis that music, regardless of genre, is an active force that not only reflects but shapes sociopolitical structures. It suggests that the history of human rights can be examined through a combination of different epistemological frameworks and methods from history, musicology, and sound studies, taking the interdependencies between sociopolitical structures and music seriously. To this end, this essay proposes a transdisciplinary framework that includes archival research, oral history interviews, and music/sound analysis. This constellation of different epistemologies and methods accounts for the multifaceted and entangled history of music and human rights, transregionally and across diverse genres.

The essay thus highlights the need to reconstruct political history through music and crafts a roadmap of how to do this. The first section shows that historians still largely underestimate and neglect music's role in the history of politics and, accordingly, human rights. Research perspectives from musicology and sound studies can help ignite innovative research agendas and address things we otherwise do not see. The second section of the paper presents two "themes" which we deem fruitful for studying the global history of music and human rights. The first, "Stages and Actors", reflects on how to investigate places and people historically involved in the musical articulations of human rights through archival research. The second, "Aesthetics and Sound", introduces and elucidates methods for music analysis and applies them to human rights research.

Part three seeks to make sense of the UDHR case study based on the two proposed approaches. It shows how a combined analysis of stages and actors on the one hand and sound studies on the other highlights the complex negotiation process surrounding the definition and meaning of human rights – and the even more salient question of who takes charge of shaping that definition. Put differently, the case of the UDHR concerts reveals that the proposed theoretical frameworks effectively serve as tools for investigating the political dimensions and potentials that are inscribed in or are connected to musical sounds. On a meta-level, studying political history through music and sound can initiate an innovative shift in epistemologies, introduce a new toolkit of methodological resources, and also engender unique ways to understand the inner workings of political power.[5] Political power seen through this lens is exercised not only through governments, organisations, institutions, and human actors in general but also in sound insofar as music pertains to symbolic orders, feelings, affects, structures of subjectivity, shared (communal) social experiences, and interpersonal relationships.

[5] See *David Kennerley*, Music, Politics, and History. An Introduction, in: Journal of British Studies 60 (2021), pp. 362–374.

III. Music, power, and politics

Music has played a powerful and formative role in the history of human rights, yet it is often overlooked. Frequently cited in demonstrations manifestations for the freedom of the arts, Article 22 of the United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in 1948, stipulated radically that every human being was entitled to "cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality". The reference to culture can be seen to include music. In the following decades, due to the global circulation of genres as varied as classical music, British rock, US jazz and blues, Brazilian *musica tropicalismo*, and South African *Mbaqanga*, music became attached to the production and distribution mechanisms of the global entertainment industry.[6] As such, music provided an influential cultural platform for the post-war world to articulate political visions grounded in human rights; at the same time, however, in opposition to such visions, music provided a tool of suppression, torture, and extinction.

Since 1948, artists the world over have used music's appeal and "universalism" to lobby for justice, freedom, and human rights. Examples are heterogenous, ranging from Argentinian-Israeli conductor *Daniel Barenboim* and Palestine-US American scholar *Edward Saïd*,[7] founders of the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra in 1999, through the Beninese-French singer *Angélique Kidjo* to US-American jazz performer *Alicia Keys*.[8] In the realm of classical music, for example, the year of the UN Declaration of Human Rights, *Luigi Dallapiccola* published "Il Prigioniero" (The Prisoner, 1948), a one-act opera that draws on ideas of torture and hope in a world that knows no justice. In 1960, *Luigi Nono* made a direct statement claim on the human rights situation with "Intolleranza" while *Mikis Theodorakis* composed "Canto General" (based on Pablo Neruda's poem) after falling victim to Greek state repression. In popular music, the list most notably includes a series of transnational Amnesty International pop concerts in the 1980s, along with hundreds of soul, rock, folk, and hip-hop artists, particularly in the Global South.

In parallel, music morphed into a tool of suppression, employed for manipulation, censorship, torture, and murder: the silencing of composers such as *Sofia Gubaidulina* in the Soviet Union, the kidnapping of musicians, such as *Miguel Estrella*, in Latin American dictatorships, the systematic use of music as torture under illiberal and liberal regimes, including in US detention centres such as Abu Ghraib, the systematic exclusion of minority music from national media such as the *Arabesk* genre in 1970s Turkey, and the murder of musical artists during the Khmer Rouge regime – 90 per cent of all Cambodian pop stars forever vanished between 1975 and 1979. Now, one might ask if the killing of musicians qualifies as a way of *using* music as a *tool* of suppression? By the same logic, one could say that shooting protesters is a way of "using protests as a tool for repression". Still, at the end of the day, the fact remains this: Throughout the world, music

[6] *Uche Onyebadi* (ed.), Political Messaging in Music and Entertainment Spaces Across the Globe, 2022.

[7] *Daniel Barenboim/Edward Saïd*, Parallels and Paradoxes. Explorations in Music and Society, 2003.

[8] cf. *Nomi Dave*, Music and the Myth of Universality. Sounding Human Rights and Capabilities, Journal of Human Rights Practice 7/1 (2015): 1–17 (2 ff.).

has been a cultural practice and a place to promote and contest visions of humanity and human rights, and a cultural means to reinforce the exclusion and oppression of minorities, making the inequalities within political systems or nation-states palpable.[9]

This paper takes what may seem to social scientists and historians as a curious, even unorthodox, approach to grasping this complexity. Rather than focusing on the lens of politics, economics, or the law, it seeks to employ a perspective of audio-based articulations for and against human rights, as a perspective that centers on the music itself. Working from the position that aesthetics, society, and politics are inseparable and focusing on the sounds, actors, and the context of musical performances and media cultures, this essay investigates how music has worked as a sonic promotion of human rights visions and issues but also as a venue for challenging those very demands. Specifically, it asks: Why have musical productions since 1945 championed human rights? How were human rights and their contestations articulated via music and musical practices across regions and genres? Where and how were such musical expressions staged, distributed, and publicised? To what extent do musical sounds bear semiotic as well as affective potentials that serve as a generator for historical articulations and manifestations of political power? To reach a more thorough examination of music's entanglement with power – biopolitical, emotional, psychological – the essay seeks to figure out a roadmap for how to properly theorise the acoustic dimension of human rights through the lens of power by way of some recent strands of sono-political theory.[10] By way of a hypothesis, the authors hold that music has entered the arena of a globalised world, offering people an emotional, transregional, and cross-genre forum to imagine, promote, but also contest human rights outside the parameters of official politics, economics, and the law and, thus, endow it with new meaning. As a result, the concept of human rights as such has morphed into something very different and difficult to grasp by common language-based definition or discourse analysis. Put differently, human rights, this paper argues, must be fundamentally rethought in terms of its sonic articulations.

In this context, music is not merely a passive reflection of social, cultural, and political power relations but an active force shaping sociopolitical structures. Music and sound studies scholars have argued that the study of music in the context of political history can show us something that we otherwise would not see. Music constitutes a sensation of foreboding change[11] – it makes advocacy, protest, exclusion, and suppression tangible by evoking feelings. Historians can retrace this phenomenon by examining written, oral, and audio sources that focus on either creating or reflecting on such moments of transformation, denial, and dissent. In this context, the term "music" refers to musical pieces, sounds, and practices that are 1) thematically related to human rights, 2) censored, banned, or targeted in any other way by authoritarian, anti-human rights regimes, 3) promoted by these very regimes in the form of, for example, official state music but also sonic tortures, 4) composed for, or appropriated

[9] *Söhnke Kunkel/Jessica Gienow-Hecht/Sebastian Jobs* (eds.), Visions of Humanity. Historical Cultural Practices since 1850, 2023.

[10] *Robin James*, The Sonic Episteme. Acoustic Resonance, Neoliberalism and Biopolitics, 2019.

[11] *Jacques Attali*, Noise. The Political Economy of Music, 1985.

for, memory-related rituals and events in post-dictatorial, democratic societies, and finally 5) not intentionally and officially crafted or staged to envision or violate human rights, but do so implicitly, as they are charged with political meanings or power in a specific context or setting. The political nature of music, that is, may not always depend on human intention.

Here is where human rights come in: Any domain of music, no matter the form, content or context, can become intertwined with human rights issues. As a result, historians and musicologists need to work with an epistemological and methodological framework capable of including different, indeed, all kinds of music regardless of genre or region. This framework opens up perspectives which account for the rich and multiple manifestations and articulations of human rights in music and render the history of music and human rights as an entangled one, paying attention to both regional musical development and contestations as well as transregional, intercontinental connections among actors, stages, productions, and aesthetics.

Thus, three premises inform the research agenda of music and human rights. First, after World War II, aligning music and human rights became common to aesthetic practice and discourse. In this, the musical experience did not simply reflect human rights advocacy but occasionally fuelled the implementation and popularisation of human rights initiatives and ideas. Throughout the last seventy years, musical venues and practices have inspired influential campaigns and movements within the global political arena, often by way of casual emotional attraction ("slacktivism"), such as in the case of the legendary Amnesty International concerts in the 1980s.[12] While these affective attractions, aesthetic visions, and artistic contextualisation of human rights did not always succeed in promoting human rights efficiently, they did yield a contentious plethora of often regionally and individually diverse musical imaginations, crafting a new language addressing human rights concerns.

Second, there is a good deal of debate about what exactly constitutes human rights. In this paper, human rights are understood to be a highly polysemic term, not merely a concept primarily coined by North American and Western European post-war liberal democracies. At the geopolitical level, the 1948 UDHR would have been impossible without the signatures of the Soviet Union (USSR) and other Marxist-oriented states and social movements around the world. In Latin America, human rights organisations were rarely associated with liberalism because the dictatorships they fought were themselves identified as economically "liberal". Progressive thinkers from China, Eastern Europe, and the Soviet Union developed their own brand of progressive thinking on the issue of human rights. In 1990, member states of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation signed the Cairo Declaration of Human Rights in Islam, which built upon but, at the same time, crucially reformulated the central ideals of the 1948 UDHR in accordance with the Shariah. While critics of the notion of human rights are often portrayed as relativists or defenders of cultural singularities, there has been a very active leftist, universalist, progressive critique of human rights that denounces human rights as an ideological function of capitalist societies based on individual-

[12] *Deena Weinstein*, The Amnesty International Tour. Transnationalism As Cultural Commodity, in: Public Culture 1/2 (1989), pp. 60–65.

ism.[13] Such diversity – indeed, cacophony – of voices is important to examine in the interplay of music and human rights.

Finally, and related to the first two premises, competing visions and formulations of human rights in the musical world continually modify and put into perspective the extent to which a musical work qualifies as relevant for the story of human rights. *Dallapiccola*'s "Il Prigioniero" is set in the Inquisition times and does not make any direct statement on the contemporary human rights situation, whereas *Nono*'s "Intolleranza" does precisely that, from a Communist perspective. By the same criteria, *Beethoven*'s "Fidelio", among many other 19th-century operas, are today often considered as works on human rights. In the same vein, human rights in music are often conflated with the notion of civil rights and social protest at large, to the extent that the lines between them become blurry.[14] The music of many hip-hop artists, such as Queen Latifah or Public Enemy, deals with racial injustice and racist state or police violence – which places these musicians squarely within the human rights discourse even though they do not always explicitly cite the term or global debates. The evolving resignification according to the evolution of context is thus a basic hermeneutical problem typical for the study of history. The two themes outlined in the next section are attentive to the fact that human rights and their contestation can constitute an objective and a practice without the term being used.

In sum, since the end of World War II, music and human rights have become inextricably related, eventually crafting a new understanding of human rights. To this end, this paper presents a model to reconstruct an entangled history of music and human rights. This framework may help future scholarship to further investigate how music made the promotion and contestation of human rights tangible, show how communities the world over imagined but also infringed upon human rights as a collective experience, and thus pave new avenues to think about and study human rights and, more generally, music and politics at large. Furthermore, the dialogue between epistemologies and methodologies from history, sound studies, and musicology may point to new ways of thinking about politics, especially in terms of affect. Both historians and scholars of sound studies have recently highlighted the need to study affect[15] as a way to explore new horizons and opportunities for scholarship across disciplines worldwide. This essay does precisely that by combining transnational music research,[16] emotional

[13] *Claude Lefort*, Droits de l'homme et politique, in: Libre 7 (published in May 1979 but dated 1980); *Carlo Invernizzi-Accetti/Justine Lacroix*, Droits de l'homme et politique. Individualisme étroit ou nouvel universalisme?, in: Raison Publique, 2016, available at https://raison-publique.fr/1291/ (last visited 27 December 2023).

[14] *Brenda Romero* et al., At the Crossroads of Music and Social Justice, 2023.

[15] *Ute Frevert*, The History of Emotions, in: Lisa Feldman Barrett et al. (eds.), Handbook of Emotions, 2016, pp. 49–65; *Luis Garcia-Mispireta*, Together, Somehow. Music, Affect, and Intimacy on the Dancefloor, 2023; *Marie Thompson/Ian Biddle* (eds.), Sound, Music, Affect. Theorizing Sonic Experience, 2013.

[16] *Tobias Janz/Chien C. Yang* (eds.), Decentering Musical Modernity. Perspectives on East Asian and European Music History, 2019; *Ignacio Corona/Alejandro Madrid*, Postnational Musical Identities. Cultural Production, Distribution, and Consumption in a Globalized Scenario, 2008; *Liz Gunner/Tom Pennfold*, Dissonances from the Global South. Song, Art and Performance in Cultures of Struggle, in: Social Dynamics 43/2 (2017), pp. 155–166; *Ron Levi*: The Musical Diplomacy of a Landless Ambassador. Hugh Masekela between

history,[17] and the study of international history[18] and human rights across musical genres and continents.

IV. Music and human rights in historiography

The alignment of two key developments marked the postwar era: the rise of and challenge to the global human rights discourse, and the concomitant rise of and challenge to the democratisation of musical production and performance. These two developments were not coincidental but, in fact, fed on each other to craft a global human rights imagery. There was, indeed, a beleaguered interplay between human rights advocacy and contestation on the one hand and music composition and performance on the other. In tandem with the momentum of decolonisation, civil, women's, and LGBTQI rights movements, and the discourse on cultural diversity in society and politics, an increasingly diversified, globalised, and ultimately contentious music market and culture emerged after World War II.[19] Such diversification mirrored the paradox running through musical productions since World War II – that is, appeals to universalism in sound and discourse relating to human rights simultaneously produced or reinforced ethnic, racial, and national particularisms. While globalising markets on the one hand and politics on the other increasingly strove to integrate and recolonise geographically diverse regions, local artists, communities, and regional organisations often deliberately chose or invented unique musical styles through which they could express themselves in their "own sonic language" (identity politics) at home and abroad. For example, Johannesburg-born singer and human-rights activist *Miriam Makeba* was musically tied to African, Latin American, and Caribbean, notably Cuban, influences, professionally to the US (where her career first flourished), and politically to anti-apartheid activism around the world. Similarly, regional music styles in Latin America and the Caribbean, often mixed with outside influences, served as powerful expressions that aesthetically articulated the merger of protest and local identity.[20] Music in these diverse geographical regions, that is, was equally influenced by European and African imports since the 16th century, enslaved and free, that eventually triggered new challenges to the status quo in a postcolonial vein, both in popular music (e.g. *Tejano*, *salsa*, *tango*, *rap*, *hip-hop*) and classical music (e.g. Hilda Dianda and Coriún Aharonián).

Curiously, research particularly dedicated to the history of music and human rights remains scarce. A few case studies exist: *Esteban Buch*'s "Trauermarsch"[21] exam-

Monterey '67 and Zaire '74, in: Interventions 20/7 (2018), pp. 987–1002.

[17] *Jan Plamper*, Geschichte und Gefühl. Grundlagen der Emotionsgeschichte, 2012; *Barbara H. Rosenwein*, Problems and Methods in the History of Emotions, Passions in Context, in: Journal of the History and Philosophy of the Emotions 1/1 (2010), pp. 1–32.

[18] *Jessica Gienow-Hecht/Frank Schumacher* (eds.), Culture and International History, 2003.

[19] *Anaïs Fléchet* et al., Musical Humanism. Yehudi Menuhin and UNESCO's International Music Council, 1969–1975, in: *Söhnke Kunkel/Jessica Gienow-Hecht/Sebastian Jobs* (eds.), Visions of Humanity. Historical Cultural Practices since 1850, 2023, pp. 228–249.

[20] *Roberto Illiano/Massimiliano Sala* (eds.), Music and Dictatorship in Europe and Latin America, 2010; *Bryan McCann*, Hello, Hello Brazil. Popular Music and the Making of Modern Brazil, 2004.

[21] *Esteban Buch*, Trauermarsch. L'Orchestre de Paris dans L'Argentine de la dictature, 2017.

ines how, in 1977, *Daniel Barenboim* and the Orchestre de Paris used classical music as a quasi-diplomatic tool in the tense bilateral relations of France and Argentina. *Buch* shows that the Orchestre struggled with the dilemma of performing in a country haunted by state-sanctioned oppression. The collections by *Daniel Fischlin* and *Ajay Heble*[22] as well as *Ian Peddie*[23] provide case studies that show the use of popular music as a means of advocating for human rights, but they focus on the activities of individual artists or groups, specific locations, and provide no link to the global history of music and human rights.[24] Others have implicitly pointed to human rights challenges in music: *Dean Vuletic*'s dynamic history of the Eurovision Song Contests since 1959 observes that the event's increasing commercialisation as well as calls for social diversity have contributed to what the author calls a "fraught relationship with democratic values in post-communist societies".[25] M. J. Grant, et al.[26] have addressed the question of how music in conflict may affect security, justice, and non-violent conflict resolution. *Marsha Baxter*[27] has documented cases of music education designed to foster equity and social justice in a racially diverse environment. *Felicity Laurence* and *Olivier Urbain* have examined questions of universality, consciousness, and connection in their edition "Music and Solidarity",[28] including a particularly instructive essay by *Maria Elisa Pinto Garcia* on music as a storytelling device to describe and heal from past human rights abuse.[29] Ethnomusicologist *Nomi Dave*, having worked in Guinea with Sierra Leonean, Liberian, and Ivorian refugees, suggests a pivot away from official human rights concerts, music-based human rights initiatives, and music's alleged universalism towards music's "practical, real-world effects".[30] *Dave* argues that informal music or dance practice in local spaces – none of which explicitly reference or allude to human rights – allow "for social cohesion to build amongst groups" as well as offer a "tool for overcoming trauma".[31] In a related way, *Sara Marcus*[32] has recently traced US history from the Reconstruction Era to the

[22] *Daniel Fischlin/Ajay Heble*, Rebel Musics. Human Rights, Resistant Sounds, and the Politics of Music, 2003.

[23] *Ian Peddie* (ed.), Popular Music and Human Rights, Vol. I. British and American Music; Vol. II. World Music, 2011.

[24] See also *Julian Fifer* et al. (eds.), The Routledge Companion to Music and Human Rights, 2022; *Farnush Ghadery*, Beyond International Human Rights Law. Music and Song in Contextualised Struggles for Gender Equality, in: Transnational Legal Theory 13/2 (2022), pp. 31–58; *Klisala Harrison*, Music Downtown Eastside. Human Rights and Capability Development in Music of Urban Poverty, 2020; *Peter Kirchschlaeger*, A Human Right to Music. An Ethical Justification, in: International Journal of Human Rights and Constitutional Studies, 8/4 (2021), pp. 284–297; *Anja Mihr/Mark Gibney* (eds.), Music and Human Rights. The Sage Handbook of Human Rights, 2014; *Adeola Romola et al.*, The Art of Human Rights. Commingling Art, Human Rights, and the Law in Africa, 2019.

[25] *Dean Vuletic*, Postwar Europe and the Eurovision Song Contest, 2018, p. 188.

[26] *M. J. Grant* et al., Music and Conflict. Interdisciplinary Perspectives, in: Interdisciplinary Science Reviews 35/2 (2013), pp. 183–198.

[27] *Marsha Baxter*, Global Music Making a Difference. Themes of Exploration, Action and Justice, in: Music Education Research 9/2 (2007), pp. 267–279.

[28] *Felicity Laurence/Olivier Urbain* (eds.), Music and Solidarity. Questions of Universality, Consciousness and Connection, 2011.

[29] *Maria E. P. Garcia*, Music and Human Rights. Towards a Paradoxical Approach, in: Ibid., pp. 117–130.

[30] *Dave* (fn. 8), p. 2.

[31] Ibid., p. 10.

[32] *Sara Marcus*, Political Disappointment. A Cultural History from Reconstruction to the AIDS Crisis, 2023.

1980s AIDS crisis to show how individual musical pieces provided important means of coping with political disappointments. She argues that, throughout the 20th century, politically marginalised groups have used music constantly to express their unrealised desires for liberation.

The lacuna of studies on music and human rights is puzzling because a number of historiographical trends indicate the stark need for such a history: First, amid an explosion of research dedicated to human rights,[33] an increasing number of historians have already pointed to the need for inserting culture into the study of human rights. They have postulated that the history of human rights should decentre key moments and sites of attention, such as the UDHR of 1948, the Helsinki Accords of 1975, or the European Court of Human Rights.[34] They point to geographical differences, different temporalities, the shallow image of human rights in many regions of the world[35] and the local impetus of decolonisation as a force to reform human rights norms in international fora.[36] Some historians have specifically looked at cultural developments, including literature, architecture, and sports, such as the Olympics,[37] as places where human rights were either promoted, contested, or both. These scholars share an interest in the cultural construction of global human rights imagery as an imaginative form of transnational humanistic culture with a stock of iconic images and aesthetic forms. *Michael Galchinsky* and *Joseph R. Slaughter*,[38] for example, have raised intriguing questions about how twentieth-century literature was entangled with human rights in foundational ways.

[33] *Michael K. Addo* (ed.), Human Rights Standards and the Responsibility of Transnational Corporations, 1999; *Barbara Keys*, Reclaiming American Virtue. The Human Rights Revolution of the 1970s, 2014; *Samuel Moyn*, The Last Utopia. Human Rights in History, 2010; *John Ruggie*, Just Business. Multinational Corporations and Human Rights, 2013; *Tehila Sasson*, Milking the Third World. Humanitarianism, Capitalism, and the Moral Economy of the Nestlé Boycott, in: American Historical Review 121/4 (2016), pp. 1196–1224; *Florian Wettstein*, Multinational Corporations and Global Justice. Human Rights Obligations of a Quasi-Governmental Institution, 2009.

[34] *Elizabeth Borgwardt*, A New Deal for the World. America's Vision for Human Rights, 2005; *Jan Eckel*, Die Ambivalenz des Guten. Menschenrechte in der Internationalen Politik seit den 1940ern, 2014.

[35] *Steven Jensen*, The Making of International Human Rights. The 1960s, Decolonization, and the Reconstruction of Human Values, 2016.

[36] *Roland Burke*, Decolonization and the Evolution of International Human Rights, 2010; *Renata De Meirelles*, Acender as velas já é profissão. A atuação da Anistia Internacional em relação ao Brasil. Durante a ditadura (1961–1981), 2016, available at https://www.teses.usp.br/teses/disponiveis/8/8138/tde-03102016-134758/publico/2016_RenataCostaReisDeMeirelles_VCorr.pdf (last visited 27 December 2023); *Rebecca Sanders*: Norm Proxy War and Resistance Through Outsourcing. The Dynamics of Transnational Human Rights Contestation, in: Human Rights Review 17/2 (2016), pp. 165–191; *Carrie B. Walling*, Human Rights Norms, State Sovereignty and Humanitarian Intervention, in: Human Rights Quarterly 37/2 (2015), pp. 383–413.

[37] *Mark Bradley*, The World Reimagined. Americans and Human Rights in the Twentieth Century, 2016; Human Rights Research and Education Centre, Human Rights and Indigeneity Exhibition, Ottawa (20–24 June 2016), available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O2w73vB73OQ (last visited 20 September 2024); *Barbara Keys* (ed.), The Ideals of Global Sport. From Peace to Human Rights, 2019; *James Loeffler*, The Particularist Pursuit of American Universalism. The American Jewish Committee's 1944 "Declaration on Human Rights", in: Journal of Contemporary History 50/2 (2014), pp. 274–295.

[38] *Michael Galchinsky*, The Modes of Human Rights Literature. Towards a Culture Without Borders, 2016; *Joseph R. Slaughter*, Human Rights, Inc. The World Novel, Narrative Form, and International Law, 2006.

What is more, in the past fifteen years, there has been a growing body of scholarship investigating music in the context of international relations, postcolonialism, and transnationalism. A number of authors have highlighted the significance of music as a form of nonverbal political communication and contestation in post-1945 politics and international relations,[39] as a means of cultural diplomacy and transborder relations,[40] and as an identity-building force since the early modern period.[41] Much of this research has focused on jazz, rock, and pop music.[42] *Penny von Eschen*,[43] for example, discusses US State Department initiatives promoting imperialist ideas of universal freedom with the help of jazz musicians who then criticised US policies while abroad. A number of case studies have also examined the political meaning of rock and pop performances such as those by *Udo Lindenberg*, *Pink Floyd*, and *Die Toten Hosen* in the former Warsaw Pact states.[44] Classical music has joined this forum of historical investigation as a latecomer.[45] Here, the history of US musical diplomacy appears to be a vibrant field.[46] Literature on postcolo-

[39] *Jessica Gienow-Hecht*, The World Is Ready to Listen. Symphony Orchestras and the Global Performance of America, in: Diplomatic History 36/1 (2012), pp. 17–28; *Jessica Gienow-Hecht*, Survival, Desire, Empowerment, and the Absence of Words. Music in Postwar Transitions, 1800–1950, in: Anaïs Fléchet et al. (eds.), Music and Post-War Transitions in the 19th and 20th Centuries, 2023, pp. 290–298; *John D. Kelly*, US Power, After 9/11 and Before It. If Not an Empire, Then What?, in: Public Culture 15/2 (2003), pp. 347–369; *Fréderic Ramel*, La Musique Comme Matériau pour l'Internationaliste. Le Cas des Opéras, in: Jean-Michel Bardez et al. (eds.), De la Musique au Politique, 2011, pp. 88–102; *Cynthia Schneider*, Cultural Diplomacy. Hard to Define, But You'd Know It If You Saw It, in: Brown Journal of World Affairs XIII/1 (2011), pp. 191–203; *John Street*, Music and Politics, 2012.

[40] *Mario Dunkel/Sara Nitzsche* (eds.), Popular Music and Public Diplomacy, 2018; *Danielle Fosler-Lussier*, Music in America's Cold War Diplomacy, 2015; *Jessica Gienow-Hecht*, Trumpeting Down the Walls of Jericho. The Politics of Art, Music and Emotion in German-American Relations, 1870–1920, in: Journal of Social History 36/3 (2003), pp. 585–613; *John Rockwell*, All American Music. Composition in the Late Twentieth Century, 1997; *Peter Schmelz*, Such Freedom, If Only Musical. Unofficial Soviet Music during the Thaw, 2009.

[41] *Rebekah Ahrendt/Mark Ferraguto/Damien Mahiet* (eds.), Music and Diplomacy from the Early Modern Era to the Present, 2014; *Esteban Buch*, La Neuvieme de Beethoven. Une histoire politique, 1999; *Jessica Gienow-Hecht*, Of Dreams and Desire. Diplomacy and Musical Nation Branding since the Early Modern Period, in: Frédéric Ramel/Cécile Prévost-Thomas (eds.), International Relations, Music and Diplomacy. Sounds and Voices on the International Stage, 2018, pp. 259–274.

[42] *Uta G. Poiger*, Jazz, Rock, and Rebels. Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany, 2000.

[43] *Penny von Eschen*, Satchmo Blows Up the World. Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War, 2004.

[44] *Jessica Gienow-Hecht*, Shame on Us? Academics, Cultural Transfer, and the Cold War. A Critical Review, in: Diplomatic History 24/3 (2000), pp. 465–494; *Joseph L. Jones*, Hegemonic Rhythms. The Role of Hip-Hop Music in 21st Century American Public Diplomacy, 2009; *Poiger* (fn. 42); *Cynthia Schneider*, Culture Communicates. US Diplomacy That Works, in: Jan Melissen (ed.), The New Public Diplomacy. Soft Power in International Relations, 2004, pp. 147–168; *John Street* et al., Playing to the Crowd. The Role of Music and Musicians in Political Participation, in: The British Journal of Politics & International Relations 10/2 (2008), pp. 269–285.

[45] *Rachel Beckles Willson*, Whose Utopia? Perspectives on the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra, in: Music & Politics 3/2 (2009), pp. 1–21; *Rachel Beckles Willson*, Orientalism and Musical Mission. Palestine and the West, 2013; *Marianne Franklin* (ed.) Resounding International Relations. On Music, Culture, and Politics, 2005; *Gienow-Hecht* (fn. 39); *Jessica Gienow-Hecht* (ed.), Music and International History in the Twentieth Century, 2015, p. 8; *Dieter Senghaas*, Frieden hören, Musik, Klang und Töne in der Friedenspädagogik, 2013; *Richard Taruskin*, The Danger of Music and Other Anti-Utopian Essays, 2009.

[46] *Emily A. Ansari*, Shaping the Policies of Cold War Musical Diplomacy. An Epistemic Commu-

nial music scenes has pointed out how, in the face of increasingly uneven globalisation, actors, bands, and orchestras on and off stage in the Global South use different genres of music as a cultural protest manifestation to merge identity and opposition to Western domination.[47] Scholars of music from a range of fields, including anthropology, ethnomusicology, sociology, and history, have highlighted the significance of postcolonial music in global history.[48] In "Noise Uprising", *Michael Denning*[49] shows how in the 1930s, shellac disks carried musical idioms and styles including *flamenco* (from Seville), *marabi* (Johannesburg), *samba* (Rio de Janeiro), jazz (New Orleans), *tango* (Buenos Aires), *hula* (Hawaii), and *kroncong* (Jakarta) around the world, eventually becoming the "soundtrack to decolonisation". Likewise, *Bob W. White*[50] studies musicians *Gilberto Gil* and *David Byrne* in tandem with other artists from the Global South, like *Oumou Sangaré* and *Youssou N'Dour*, to reveal the inner workings of musical encounter and consumption on a global scale. *Shana Redmond*[51] has examined how songs transformed into weapons of resistance in the African diaspora, merging protest movements and transregional solidarity.

Building on these strands of existing literature, we suggest a conceptual framework to write an entangled and cohesive history of music and human rights in a global context. We aim to tackle the question of why and how the promotion, negotiation, and contestation of human rights have manifested in sound aesthetics, how musical actors and stages have shaped human rights agendas and their rejection, and what larger musical contexts shape human rights advocacy and contestation.

V. Methodology: "actors and stages" – "aesthetics and music"

Music and human rights can pertain to three different interactions: Music can be,

nity of American Composers, in: Diplomatic History 36/1 (2012), pp. 41–52; *Clare Croft*, Dancers as Diplomats. American Choreography in Cultural Exchange, 2015; *Lisa E. Davenport*, Jazz Diplomacy. Promoting America in the Cold War Era, 2009; *Eschen* 2004; *Fosler-Lussier* (fn. 40); *Simo Mikkonen/Pekka Suutari* (eds.), Music, Art and Diplomacy. East-West Cultural Interactions and the Cold War, 2016; *Poiger* (fn. 42).

47 *Gwen Ansell*, Soweto Blues. Jazz, Popular Music, and Politics in South Africa, 2004; *Christopher Ballantine*, Marabi Nights. Jazz, "Race" and Society in Early Apartheid South Africa, 2012; *John Connell/Chris Gibson*, World Music. Deterritorializing Place and Identity, in: Progress in Human Geography 28/3 (2004), pp. 342–361; *David B. Coplan*, In Township Tonight! Three Centuries of South African Black City Music and Theatre, 2007; *Louise Meintjes*, Sound of Africa! Making Zulu Music in a South African Studio, 2003; *Carol Muller*, Musical Echoes. South African Women Thinking in Jazz, 2011; *Tejumola Olaniyan*, Arrest the Music. Fela and his Rebel Art and Politics, 2004; *Olabode F. Omojola*, The Music of Fela Sowande. Encounters, African Identity, and Creative Ethnomusicology, 2009; *Alvin Petersen*, A Question of You Taking the Bread and Giving Me the Crust? Post-1994 Music Education in the Republic of South Africa as a Human Rights Issue, in: Elizabeth Gould et al. (eds.), Exploring Social Justice. How Music Education Might Matter, 2009, pp. 152–165; *Gavin Steingo*, Kwaito's Promise. Music and the Aesthetics of Freedom in South Africa, 2016.

48 *Ronald Radano/Tejumola Olanyian* (eds.), Audible Empire, 2016; *Timothy Taylor*, Global Pop. World Music, World Markets, 1997.

49 *Michael Denning*, Noise Uprising. The Audiopolitics of a Musical World Revolution, 2015.

50 *Bob W. White* (ed.), Music and Globalization. Critical Encounters, 2011.

51 *Shana Redmond*, Anthem. Social Movements and the Sound of Solidarity in the African Diaspora, 2013.

first and foremost, an expression through which human rights discourse is articulated, negotiated, and contested explicitly by outspoken political activists. Moreover, the struggle over the composition, production, performance, and consumption of music can morph into a fight over human rights. Finally, music can have its own effects on human rights issues, either because it shapes or enhances human rights contentions and sociopolitical power structures on an aesthetic level.

The transdisciplinary framework outlined here can be used to guide more detailed studies combining archival research or oral history interviews with artists, journalists, concert attendants, media listeners, and sound analysis. We suggest two different research themes, each focusing on a particular facet of music production, performance, and consumption that weave a net between the research fields of music and sound studies on the one hand and history on the other. "Actors and Stages" reflects on sites and agency in musical practices. "Aesthetics and Music", in turn, entails the analysis of various and often competing sound worlds throughout different parts of the globe and connects these to human rights issues. This approach aims to develop a novel methodology because the two have not been used in tandem before and, more importantly, because it helps generate research results based on archival and musical material reflecting the emotional dimension of human rights in both promotion and contestation.

1. Actors and stages

Motifs and motivations of organisations and musicians giving concerts either in the name of human rights or to defy the same are crucial to the investigation of human rights. Such an approach needs to be specifically dedicated to the role of places and people in the sound worlds outlined below. The efficacy of this type of performance hinges on the actors' visibility and opportunity to climb and claim public stages. "Actor", in this context, can refer to anybody involved in the genesis, performance, production, or consumption of music.

The key concept informing such an approach revolves around the concept of "the stage". While the stage concept has been used for the regional study of music and US diplomatic history,[52] it has never been applied globally. The stage is a designated physical space marked by intensified attention and display, a cultural situation involving the performer and observer. Scholars of drama believe that situations involving looking, showing, and listening represent a stage where audiences practice participation. Simultaneously, scholars from the field of performance studies argue that the stage is also a place for undoing meanings taken for granted, which often yields ambiguous forms of cultural expression. Nothing on stage, that is, is meaningless. The director, conductor, bandleader, actors, and musicians all seek to generate meaning, and so do audiences. All spectators typically generate some sort of interpretation, even if that interpretation remains rudimentary, and to do so, they strain their perception, including all of their senses: They feel, they listen, they sense, and they smell.[53]

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[52] *Gienow-Hecht* (fn. 39).

[53] *Erika Fischer-Lichte*, The Transformative Power of Performance. A New Aesthetics (trans. Saskya Jain), 2008; *Peter Marx*, „Niemand zeugt für den Zeugen". Die Bühne als Medium der Erinnerung. *George Tabori*, in: Benedikt Descourvières et al. (eds.), Mein Drama findet nicht mehr statt. Deutschsprachige Theatertexte im 20. Jahrhundert, 2006, pp. 201–208; *Peter Marx*, Hamlets

Repertories likewise chosen by actors play a key role in staging affect. We know from the history of benefit concerts[54] that musical actors in the past have sought to mobilise people by performing specific compositions from both the classical and pop music canons. For example, classical composers such as *Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart* and *Ludwig van Beethoven* and pieces such as the "Lacrimosa" or the "Ninth Symphony" are commonly featured at such concerts, allegedly projecting composers' love of liberty.

The theme puts much emphasis on the symbolic value of "place" in staged musical affect. Places may be designated concert stages, but also streets, squares, religious buildings, prisons, beaches, public institutions, and train stations. These multifarious locations provide space for musical performances to be translated into political meaning and studied in depth. For example, the Boston Symphony Orchestra gave a series of anniversary concerts in honour of the UDHR beginning in December of 1949 in New York's famous, highly visible Carnegie Hall; successive concerts were moved into the General Assembly Hall, an event that we examine more closely later. Likewise, between 1986 and 1998, Amnesty International organised a series of concerts culminating in "Human Rights Now!" in 1988, a six-week, five-continent, fifteen-nation, twenty-concert tour across the world with the aim of letting people, as one artist put it, "feel" the interconnectedness of their worlds and fears.

To provide a full picture of music as a site of human rights promotion and contestation, "Actors and Stages" can also examine stages as sites of heavy conflict over human rights abrogation with their attendant actors. Anticipating latter-day visions of women's rights as human rights, from the 1960s on, on stage and in orchestra pits throughout the world, women decried their own lack of presence and the denial of their freedom to play. For example, the regular performances of the Women's Philharmonic became a picture book example of activism in the name of human rights demands. Founded in 1981, the orchestra served as a forum for female conductors and players who joined instruments and batons to demand their right to cultural expression as stipulated in the UDHR and promote female players and composers on stage. As a counterpoint, the Tehran Symphony Orchestra cancelled a performance planned for the closing ceremony of an international wrestling event on 29 November 2015 after the authorities objected to the presence of women musicians among the orchestra members. In both instances, actors – activists and officials – used symphony stages to promote or abrogate women's physical and intellectual presence in orchestras.[55]

Further sites of human rights abrogation include censorship, bans, and persecution. Asian authoritarian regimes such as *Ne Win* (1962 to 1988) in Burma[56] imposed strict aesthetic regulations on the creation and performance of music. We know today that in the 1960s, Cambodia produced

Reise nach Deutschland. Eine Kulturgeschichte, 2018.

[54] *Sam O'Connell*, Which Music for Which Catastrophe? The Functions of Popular Music Twenty-first Century Benefit Concerts, in: Ian Peddie (ed.), Popular Music and Human Rights, Vol. I. British and American Music, 2011, pp. 101–113.

[55] *Anna Rauscher/Ivan Ivanov/Peter Bofinger*, No Bra Burning in the Orchestra Pit. Women's Rights Activism in the American Classical Music Scene, 1960–1990, 2018 (Freie Universität), unpublished.

[56] *Andrew Selth*, Burma, Kipling and Western Music. The Riff from Mandalay, 2017.

a vibrant multi-national musical culture symbolising the utopia of a borderless world, fusing Caribbean-tinged rhythms, contemporary American rock, pop, and soul with lyrics sung in Khmer. During the *Khmer Rouge* regime from 1975 to 1979, 90 per cent of all Cambodian pop stars, including celebrities such as Ros Seray Sothea, Mao Sareth, and Sinn Sisamouth, vanished in one of the worst genocides in Asian history.[57]

In Latin America, authoritarian states systematically censored musical productions by "undesirable" artists, such as the recording "Banquete Dos Mendigos" concert in Rio de Janeiro in 1973.[58] Artists such as the Argentinian pianist *Miguel de Estrella* were persecuted, imprisoned, and tortured, and others were murdered, such as *Victor Jara* in Chile. Simultaneously, the Teatro Colón in Argentina transformed classical music institutions into a force of stability and invited Western ensembles on tours, for instance the Orchestre de Paris in Buenos Aires.[59]

In Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, postwar artists and concerts banned or at least questioned since the 1950s included a host of Western pop idols but also domestic jazz and rock groups that articulated repression, such as *Mashina Vremeni*.[60] Socialist governments, in particular, frowned upon jazz concerts as a public Western articulation of individual freedom, while regional musicians emphatically celebrated the genre as a personal expression and means of opposition to authoritarianism,[61] not much unlike latter-day rappers in Africa.[62]

Yet, over time, authoritarian leaders began to understand jazz as the music of the oppressed. Similarly, from the 1970s on, acceptance of rock music often served as an instrument of appeasement (for domestic youth) and cultural diplomacy (to improve relations with liberal regimes). Classical works that were once banned in Maoist China, such as the "Butterfly Lovers Concerto", arranged by Chen Gang and He Zhanhao, eventually became one of China's cultural exports and rose to international fame. We also know that since the 1980s, some authoritarian regimes went on to lift bans and turn formerly undesirable music into major diplomatic tools and cultural export products: In China, this change included versions of Western pop ballads (*Liuxing*) and rock music (*Yaogun*),[63] to the extent that in the 1980s, rock musician Chui Jian became a notable actor in the quest for the freedom of self-expression and the first ever popular music artist in the country to obtain permission to travel abroad to give concerts on international stages.

The appropriation of formerly censored genres, however, did not signal appropriation of protest. We know, for example, that as late as 2012, Russian police jailed the fe-

[57] *Stephen Mamula*, Starting from Nowhere? Popular Music in Cambodia after the Khmer Rouge, in: Asian Music 39 (2008), pp. 26–41.

[58] *Márcia Ramos de Oliviera*, O (Lp) Banquette dos Mendigos e a Censura Musical no Brasil (1973–2013), in: Resonancias 18 (2014), pp. 155–180.

[59] *Buch* (fn. 21).

[60] *Jolanta Pekacz*, Did Rock Smash the Wall? The Role of Rock in Political Transition, in: Popular Music 13/1 (1994), pp. 41–49.

[61] *Gleb Tsipursky*, Socialist Fun. Youth, Consumption, and State-Sponsored Popular Culture in the Soviet Union 1945–1970, 2016.

[62] *Eric Charry* (ed.), Hip Hop Africa. New African Music in a Globalizing World, 2012.

[63] *Nimrod Baranovitch*, China's New Voices. Popular Music, Ethnicity, Gender, and Politics, 1978–1997, 2003.

male punk band Pussy Riot for criticising Russian President *Vladimir Putin* during a concert in Moscow.[64] Many artists banned in this way subsequently featured prominently on pop and classical programme stages in liberal states as an expression of solidarity. Here, music fulfils a triple function: It serves to celebrate human rights values in the face of overt oppression; it resonates with a presumed medium of liberty and freedom; and it offers itself as a soundscape to reveal, quite literally, how human rights and their opposite sound.[65]

The historical role of music in the context of human rights violations on concealed stages, such as prisons and execution and torture chambers, represents another site to be studied in the context of actors and stages. Using music as a tool of suppression means converting a defining aspect of what makes us human into a means of dehumanisation. Compromises incurred by national orchestras playing under authoritarian regimes are well studied.[66] In German concentration camps, inmates played for leisure but also for fellow prisoners marching to the gas chambers. We also know that during the Chilean and Argentinian dictatorships, prison guards used music – classical, opera, and other genres – to torture inmates. Local guards and soldiers used music as a tool of brutalisation[67] and even inspired latter-day torturers in North America. During the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, US officials tested musical methods for rendering the enforced extraction of information invisible,[68] ranging from heavy metal, opera arias, and patriotic marches to children's tunes, including Disney's "It's a Small World".[69]

2. Aesthetics and music

Human rights and their contestation can thus be delineated in a plethora of sound worlds. Aesthetics, in this context, refers to how musicians envision, compose, and perform music, as well as the ways critics and audiences consume, listen, enjoy, react to, and criticise music. In general, musicologists highlight the ambivalent character of music insofar as its sounds can sonically stabilise and reinforce existing sociopolitical power structures as well as offer a site of aesthetic utopias where existing social and political relations can be symbolically overridden. Scholars of the nascent field of "sound studies", in

[64] *Gulnaz Sharafutdinova*, The Pussy Riot Affair and Putin's Démarche from Sovereign Democracy to Sovereign Morality, in: The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity 42/4 (2014), pp. 615–621.

[65] *Danielle Fosler-Lussier*, Music Divided. Bartók's Legacy in Cold War Culture, 2007.

[66] *Fritz Trümpi*, The Political Orchestra. The Vienna and Berlin Philharmonics During the Third Reich, 2016.

[67] *Katia Chornik*, Memories of Music in Political Detention in Chile under Pinochet, in: Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies 27/2 (2018), pp. 157–173; *Koby Cohen/Charlie Zaharoff*, A Comparative History of Musical Brutality in Military Detention, 2018 (Freie Universität Berlin), unpublished; *Alejandro Herrero/Analía Lutowicz*, Memoria Sonora. Una nueva mirada para la historia argentina reciente, in: Susana Espinosa (ed.), Escritos sobre udiovisión, 2009; *Raúl Minsburg/Analia Lutowicz*, Memoria Sonora de los Centros Clandestinos de Detención, Tortura y Exterminio, 2010, available at http://conti.derhuman.jus.gov.ar/2010/10/mesa-10/minsburg_lutowicz_mesa_10.pdf (last visited 11 August 2019); *Leslie Morris*, The Sound of Memory, in: The German Quarterly 74/4 (2001), pp. 368–378.

[68] *Suzanne G. Cusick*, Music as Torture / Music as Weapon, in: TRANS – Revista Transcultural de Música, 2006, available at https://www.sibetrans.com/trans/articulo/152/music-as-torture-music-as-weapon (last visited 20 July 2019); *Jonathan Pieslak*, Sound Targets. American Soldiers and Music in the Iraq War, 2009.

[69] *Martin Daughtry*, Listening to War. Sound, Music, Trauma, and Survival in Wartime Iraq, 2015.

particular, emphasise that linkages between sound and the sociopolitical, such as the previously discussed examples, reflect cultural constructions; many, like *Small*,[70] argue that music has no universal essence. The historical circumstances that make certain sounds into what they eventually signify always have to be analysed. Historians seeking to reconstruct the history of music and human rights thus need to pay attention to sound and identify the symbolic dimensions artists choose to convey a political message to a listening public. On a methodological level, sounds can be treated as a primary source and can be analysed in close connection to social orders, hierarchies, and political orders.

From the 1980s and 1990s onward, working under what is often referred to as "new musicology", music scholars have begun to combine perspectives from cultural history, cultural studies, and aesthetics. They analyse music as a social text[71] or, in the words of music anthropologist *Steven Feld*, "sound structure as social structure".[72] Defining this approach, musicologist *Susan McClary* understands music as "a medium that participates in social formation by influencing the ways we perceive our feelings, our bodies, our desires, our very subjectivities – even if it does so surreptitiously, without most of us knowing how".[73] While *McClary* makes clear that music, often in very subtle and subliminal ways, structures the reproduction of sociopolitical hegemonies, other authors like *Georgina Born*[74] and *Sheila Whiteley*[75] point to the transgressive and utopian potentials of music which, as *Whiteley* phrases it, "provides a specific insight into the ways in which fantasy – whether through watching a live performance or in the intimacy of listening to music in the private sphere of the bedroom – can signal both what is denied and what we would like to experience".[76] Elaborating on these perspectives, "Aesthetics and Music" aims to account for the Janus-headed power of music as an aesthetic practice which, on the one hand, structures the everyday and works in support of the sociopolitical status quo, while on the other it encourages listeners and performers to enter sonified (i.e. non-speech audio) worlds that differ from the everyday, allowing for transitional experiences and critical reassessments of the ordinary.

To tackle the interplay of aesthetics, music, and human rights, the rather recent field of sound studies appears tailor-made. For the last twenty years, scholars working in this – in itself transdisciplinary – field have shown how (musical) sounds, sound technologies, and modes of listening have historically shaped the way people understand and form their modes of being (subjectivities, bodies) and position themselves and others in relation to their social environments.[77] In particular,

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[70] *Christopher Small*, Why Doesn't the Whole World Love Chamber Music, in: American Music 19/3 (2001), pp. 340–359.

[71] *Richard Middleton*, Studying Popular Music, 1990; *John Shepherd*, Music as Social Text, 1991.

[72] *Steven Feld*, Sound Structure as Social Structure, in: Ethnomusicology 28/3 (1984), pp. 383–409.

[73] *Susan McClary*, Constructions of Subjectivity in Schubert's Music, in: Philip Brett et al. (eds.), Queering the Pitch. The New Gay and Lesbian Musicology, 2013, pp. 205–233 (211).

[74] *Georgina Born*, Music and the Materialization of Identities, in: *Journal of Material Culture* 16/4 (2011), pp. 376–388 (380–381).

[75] *Sheila Whiteley*, Popular Music and the Dynamics of Desire, in: Sheila Whiteley/Jennifer Rycenga (eds.), Queering the Popular Pitch, 2006, pp. 249–261.

[76] Ibid., p. 251.

[77] *Anahid Kassabian*, Ubiquitous Listening. Affect, Attention, and Distributed Subjectivity, 2013;

sound studies have highlighted the need to study music in its affective dimensions.[78] Such an approach shows how music's symbolic as well as affective potentials have profound implications for the history of human rights.

From the perspectives of musicology and sound studies, musical sounds are rife with symbolic and semiotic meanings.[79] Social conditions register in music through sonic codes which articulate cultural power relations in terms of, for instance, gender,[80] race,[81] class,[82] national identity,[83] or intersections thereof.[84] Listeners perceive musical sounds as expressions of the social world because they have learned to associate certain parameters, such as the sound of a certain instrument or the timbre of a voice, with region, identity, and so on.[85] Cultural differences are mapped on musical sounds, which then function as signifiers: thus, the sitar sounds like "India", and the bagpipe sounds like "Scotland". From this point of view, music can tell historians much about the times, places, and social power structures they wish to examine. The application of sound studies and musicology enables the historian to pay attention to the qualities of certain sound parameters in order to ask what kind of statements artists and audiences make in terms of identity politics: a Scot playing the bagpipe might confirm stereotypes of "Scottishness," while a Scot playing the sitar might not (and would perhaps be regarded as an act of cultural appropriation). It is possible, then, to analyse musical sounds in close relation to social discourse (e.g. their manifestations in concert reviews, press, and media) and to reconstruct how people perceive specific sounds in specific contexts as a way to promote human rights (e.g. transnational human rights concerts), negotiate and transform their meanings (e.g. musicians who wish to make a political statement through song and composition), or rigidly contest these by symbolically underlining the rule of authority and violence (e.g. military marches or festivity parades in authoritarian regimes).

Studying music in the context of human rights history means addressing both sung music and non-verbal music. The most ob-

Jonathan Sterne, The Audible Past. Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction, 2003; *Emily Thompson*, The Soundscape of Modernity. Architectural Acoustics and the Culture of Listening in America, 1900–1933, 2002.

78 *Steve Goodman*, Sonic Warfare. Sound, Affect, and the Ecology of Fear, 2010; *Marie Thompson*, Beyond Unwanted Sound. Noise, Affect and Aesthetic Moralism, 2017.

79 *David Brackett*, Interpreting Popular Music, 1995; *Stan Hawkins*, Settling the Pop-Score. Pop Texts and Identity Politics, 2002; *Philip Tagg*, Kojak. 50 Seconds of Television Music. Toward the Analysis of Affect in Popular Music, 2000 [1979].

80 *Susan McClary*, Feminine Endings. Music, Gender, and Sexuality, 1991; *Freya Jarman-Ivens*, Queer Voices. Technologies, Vocalities, and the Musical Flaw, 2011; *Kai A. Hansen*, Pop Masculinities. The Politis of Gender in Twenty-First Century Popular Music, 2021.

81 *Tricia Rose*, Black Noise. Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America, 1994; *Jennifer L. Stoever*, The Sonic Color Line. Race & the Cultural Politics of Listening, 2016.

82 *Aaron Fox*, Real Country. Music and Language in Working-Class Culture, 2004; *Nathan Wiseman-Trouse*, Performing Class in British Popular Music, 2008.

83 *Melanie Schiller*, Soundtracking Germany. Popular Music and National Identity, 2018.

84 *Daphne Brooks*, Liner Notes for the Revolution. The Intellectual Life of Black Feminist Sound, 2021; *Nadine Hubbs*, Rednecks, Queers, and Country Music, 2014.

85 *Nina Eidsheim*, Sun, Race and the Aesthetics of Vocal Timbre, in: Olivia Bloechel et al. (eds.), Rethinking Difference in Music Scholarship, 2015, pp. 338–365; *Jacob Smith*, Vocal Tracks. Performance and Sound Media, 2015.

vious way to articulate political visions in music is through lyrics and language. Tellingly, after World War II, popular music experienced an explicit lyric politicisation.[86] For example, the post-World War II folk revival in many different regions of the world gave rise to politicised grassroots movements in which singer-songwriters accompanied themselves on guitar to sing about exploitation, war, and alienation countered by visions of anti-consumerism, solidarity, and communal life.[87] In the counter cultures of the 1960s, such protest songs thrived globally, ranging from the North American and British new folk movement to German *Liedermacher*, Italian *cantautori*, Brazilian *tropicalismo*, and Japanese *fōku*. U.S. American singer *Joan Baez* repeatedly rendered her famous version of "We Shall Overcome", a utopian song derived from African-American gospel, notably at the 1963 March on Washington. The song's lyrics, speaking from a "we" perspective in addressing the quest and the hope of collectively leaving behind the inequalities and oppressive structures of the status quo, are emblematic of the lyrical protest of the 1960s folk singers and the call for solidarity against social and economic injustice. "We Shall Overcome" indeed became one of the unofficial anthems (along with other songs such as *Sam Cooke*'s "A Change is Gonna Come") of the Civil Rights Movement. As such, the song expressed a contemporary counter-cultural sensibility channelled through music.

Depending on state policy, artists had different choices about what and how to play. These choices, in turn, bore directly on the meaning of human rights and music's ability to foreground, reflect, or defy them. While *Baez* never had to face major threats for singing political folk songs in the United States, artists operating in authoritarian regimes routinely struggled with state oppression. At the peak of the Brazilian *tropicalismo* movement in 1968, the government arrested singer-songwriters *Gilberto Gil* and *Caetano Veloso* for public performance and distribution of their overtly political songs, sentencing them to three months in prison, then forcing them to leave the country.[88] Other *tropicalismo* artists, however, such as the experimental musician *Tom Zè*, were never charged. *Zè* managed to produce a steady stream of critical songs throughout the late 1960s and 1970s by toning down the political content through wry metaphors and irony. Many of *Zè*'s songs, like his famous São, São Paulo, Meu Amor, satirically attacked the strong class cleavage and injustice of Brazilian society. The song even won an award at the national TV contest Festival de Música Popular Brasileira in 1968, the same year *Gil* and *Veloso* were arrested. "São, São Paulo, Meu Amor" sarcastically pointed at the government's massive civil rights violations at the expense of the underprivileged rural population and the ignorance among the privileged urban upper and middle classes who were not suffering under military rule.[89] *Zè*'s sarcastic love confession for (and actual critique of) life in São Paulo was set to a catchy,

[86] *Jonathan C. Friedman* (ed.), The Routledge History of Social Protest in Popular Music, 2013.

[87] *Michael Brocken*, The British Folk Revival. 1944–2002, 2003; *Gillian Mitchell*, The North American Folk Music Revival. Nation and Identity in the United States and Canada, 1945–1980, 2007; *Stephen Petrus/Ronald Cohen*, Folk City. New York and the American Folk Music Revival, 2015.

[88] *Marcos Napolitano*, A Invenção da Música Popular Brasileira. Um Campo de Reflexão para a História Social, in: Latin American Music Review 18/2 (1998), pp. 92–105.

[89] *Christopher Dunn*, Tom Zé and the Performance of Citizenship in Brazil, in: Popular Music 28/2 (2009), pp. 1–21.

happy, and simple pop melody, which even animated the TV studio audience at the Festival de Música Popular Brasileira to sing along with him.

The two contrasting examples of *Baez* and *Zé* illustrate an important point highlighted by musicologists and sound studies scholars: Musical sounds are never just a neutral container for lyrical content but are actively involved in framing and shaping the form of a political message or meaning in a specific context or situation. Given the sociopolitical circumstances, *Zé* worked out his political protest through sonic camouflaging and irony (the "happy" and catchy pop song, seemingly innocent and appropriate to sing along with). In doing so, he managed to avoid the fate of *Gil* and *Veloso*; instead, he even received permission to climb the stage of a national television contest. Baez, on the other hand, articulated protest in a very straightforward and serious musical manner. She performed her version in a way that spoke to the quest for honesty and authenticity typical of the aesthetics of the 1960s folk song: a down-to-earth-arrangement of a voice accompanied by the sounds of an acoustic guitar, thereby meeting the expectations of her audience and – just like *Zé*, but in stark contrast to his irony – animating the crowd gathered at the March on Washington to sing along. What is more, the two examples also illustrate the affective dimension of music, including collective mood management: *Zè* used catchy pop sounds that matched the happy party atmosphere of the TV festival (the video footage shows people cheering and enthusiastic and energised bodies), whereas *Baez* performed a song which borrowed from the tradition of spirituals, achieving a sort of contemplative communion among her audience (the video footage shows people holding hands and bodies swaying slowly to the music). Both songs aesthetically fit their occasion, and the audience could entrain to the feelings conveyed, thereby aligning themselves (whether consciously or unwittingly) with the counter-cultural sensibility of the music. Thus, both lyrics and sounds do matter when studying the articulation of politics and human rights in music. The examples of *Baez* and *Zé* show that circumstance, situation, and contextualisation of music play a crucial role when artists aesthetically craft and perform their expressions of political protest.

The comparison shows that, not surprisingly, liberal and illiberal regimes differed in their response to music deemed undesirable. State institutions in Eastern Europe used classical music and its attendant institutions to create and guard what they saw as stable social orders throughout the second half of the twentieth century. Simultaneously, they censored certain musical expressions and genres as disruptive. The ideology of socialist realism promoted works portraying the life and reality of the common people. Socialist realism deemed aesthetic expressions of individualised feelings and sentiments as remnants of bourgeois culture and hedonism, and according to this doctrine, socialist leaders saw abstract avant-garde compositions and noise genres as "decadent" outpourings of Western capitalism. Consequently, they put a strict ban on Western popular music or appropriated some genres, staging them in "toned down" and socialist terms.[90] Yet the Soviet government's insistence on socialist realism began to wane to the extent that avant-garde Western techniques were tolerated (within specific contexts) from the 1960s on.[91] And by the 1970s, many East German composers

[90] *Michael Rauhut*, Beat in der Grauzone. DDR-Rock 1964 bis 1972. Politik und Alltag, 1993.

[91] *Schmelz* (fn. 40).

were incorporating techniques of Western new music without suffering any political consequences. The dichotomy, that is, changed over time and was not uniformly applied everywhere in the Eastern Bloc. For instance, the Polish government tolerated a much wider variety of music than the GDR.[92] Here, the distinction between music and "unmusical" noise gained an additional dimension as it was embedded within the emerging human rights discourse.

Postwar liberal states, in turn, opted for milder – and often contradictory – strategies of control to fight what many perceived as the "musical enemy" from within. "God Save the Queen" (1977), an iconic song by the British punk band The Sex Pistols, for example, was banned by the BBC because it ridiculed the British aristocracy on a symbolic level. By ironically quoting the title lines of the British national anthem in the musical context of loud and heavy punk with singer *Johnny Rotten*'s aggressive vocal delivery, the band uttered their protest against what they saw as a conservative and old-fashioned institution. In addition to the BBC ban, the band was likewise stopped and searched by the police during a performance of that song while cruising on the River Thames during the Silver Jubilee festivities of *Queen Elizabeth*'s accession to the throne.

These examples show that sounds bear a symbolic dimension insofar as they work like codes in the sense of semiotics and cultural studies, and their semantic potentials or properties can be analysed. The symbolic dimensions of sounds are manifold. Often, these sound structures originate in distinct genres like rock, hip-hop, folk, soul, classical, or avant-garde, which evolve around a sonic palette of different musical parameters – such as timbres, rhythms, and harmonic structures – to which societies attribute different values. Musical genres and their sounds are thus charged with certain meanings: They are discursively equated with manifestations of social structures and cultural identities in terms of, for instance, race, class, gender, or generation. In the European and North American context, some genres were delegitimised as nothing more than "unmusical noise" and regularly came under attack from cultural elites. Throughout the second half of the twentieth century, compositions borrowing from or building upon black musical traditions, such as rock'n'roll or hip-hop, have been linked to social unrest, disorder, and vulgarity, as well as sexually immoral, deviant, and criminal behaviours.[93] Entire genres have thus been enmeshed with a discourse that (re)produces social differences and stigmas. In the case of hip-hop, for example, the sweeping accusation of its alleged "rawness" and "vulgarity" were (and still are) tied to the racist discourse of white patriarchal society, as *bell hooks* has argued.[94]

Because the sound worlds of a genre are always charged with symbolic meanings and brought into conversation with cultural discourse, the choice of genre can be essential for framing or underlining political statements. In other words, artists might work with the sounds of a certain genre because it is discursively entangled

[92] *Gertrud Pickhan/Rüdiger Ritter* (eds.), Jazz Behind the Iron Curtain, 2011; *Christian Schmidt-Rost*, Jazz in der DDR und Polen. Geschichte eines transkulturellen Transfers, 2015.

[93] *Bodo Mrozek*, Jugend. Pop. Kultur. Eine transnationale Geschichte, 2019; *Poiger* (fn. 42); *Rose* (fn. 81).

[94] *bell hooks*, Sexism and Misogyny. Who Takes the Rap? Misogyny, Gangsta Rap, and The Piano, in: Z Magazine, 1994, pp. 26–29.

with certain symbolic meanings. In her book "The Space Between the Notes. Rock and the Counterculture", *Sheila Whiteley*[95] analyses the signature sounds of 1960s rock music regarding their symbolic meanings. She argues that the electrified, warbling, and distorted textures of bands like Cream, The Beatles, Pink Floyd, or Jimi Hendrix articulated the counter-cultural longing for free expression, free sexuality, and alternative forms of spirituality as well as a more liberal view on drugs. While this choice might not always be consciously intended, artists often show a high degree of self-reflection. In 2000, a few months after *General Robert Gueï* had seized power in Côte d'Ivoire by way of a *coup d'état* and installed a military government, musician *Tiken Jah Fakoly* reacted with "Promeses de la Caméléon", a protest song that addressed the undemocratic political climate which reinforced inner tensions among ethnic groups and left large parts of the population voiceless. *Fakoly* explicitly chose reggae for his political message because, to him, it reflected the essential Afro-diasporic protest genre, the "music of opinions" expressing the rights of "those without means",[96] thereby situating his music within the political legacy of other Afro-diasporic or African reggae musicians. Thus, Fakoly is a picture book example of how artists strategically employ distinct sound structures to define their political positions. In a globalised world, the politics of reggae travelled rapidly and transcended its original localities. Artists of colour who do not have an Afro-diasporic background have employed reggae music to protest racist oppression in their home countries, as *Elizabeth Turner* demonstrates in her study on the 1980s band Herbs from New Zealand.[97]

While the cases above comprise examples of rather explicit political articulations, musical sounds are also implicitly connected to politics and human rights issues. To make a distinction between political and unpolitical music is, as ethnomusicologist *Kerstin Klenke* notes, "a rather futile enterprise", since "it is not unusual for political ideology to extend its reach to issues such as fame, family, friendship and musical aesthetics".[98] By the same token, scholars of musicology and sound studies emphasise that the unfolding of social order and hierarchies in music does not necessitate any wilful authorship of performers, producers, or other individuals involved. Regardless of the sociopolitical structures or political systems surrounding it, whether staged, broadcast, or recorded, music always takes on political meanings. These intrinsic political meanings of music are always there. They become all the more powerful thanks to what sound studies scholar *Martha Garcia Quiñones*[99] calls in her collection Ubiquitous Musics, meaning the presence of music within various social and mediatised spaces, ranging from fashion stores in international airports to globetrotting street performers, office spaces, and bars. Collectively, these generate soundscapes

[95] *Sheila Whiteley*, The Space Between the Notes. Rock and the Counterculture, 1992.

[96] *Daniel B. Reed*, Promises of the Chameleon. Reggae Artist Tiken Jah Fakoly's Intertextual Contestation of Power in the Côte D'Ivoire, in: Eric Charry (ed.), Hip Hop Africa. New African Music in a Globalizing World, 2012, pp. 92–108 (96).

[97] *Elizabeth Turner*, The Discourse of Protest, Resistance and Social Commentary in Reggae Music, 2022.

[98] *Kerstin Klenke*, The Sound State of Uzbekistan. Popular Music and Politics in the Karimov Era, 2019, pp. 62–63.

[99] *Martha Garcia Quiñones* (ed.), Ubiquitous Musics. The Everyday Sounds That We Don't Always Notice, 2013.

defining everyday perceptions, sensibilities, and knowledge of individuals, communities, or national audiences.

Put differently, even if they do not realise it, people constantly listen to the political environments in which they live. If that environment celebrates, questions, or contests rights – human, civil, or otherwise – audiences absorb that message every single day. The music played and represented on national media, for example, constructs an aural image of what it means to be a "natural citizen" or denied that status. As *Martin Stokes*[100] and *Jennifer Lynn Stoever*[101] show for 1970s Turkey and the 1930s and 1940s US, the structural exclusion of minority music from national television and radio culture served to reproduce and legitimise social inequalities. *Stokes* demonstrates how the Turkish government banned the music genre *Arabesk* from officially sponsored airwaves due to its close ties to Arabic musical traditions, notably *Maqam* modes. Turkish officials viewed *Arabesk* as a threat to the nation because its sounds symbolised pan-Islamic civilisation and, additionally, was predominantly practised by Arab and Kurdish-speaking minorities of South East Anatolia. Silencing minority cultures on national broadcasts thus presumably served to stabilise the unity of the Turkish nation-state by exclusion. In a similar vein, *Stoever*, in her book "The Sonic Color Line", studies the structural exclusion of African American artists and music on US broadcasting stations in the 1930s and 1940s due to the radio industry's official white middle-class agenda. Radio in 1930s and 1940s America officially served as a "national" and "democratic" medium, featuring exclusively white artists, white voices, and white sounds on national radio, invoking what *Stoever* calls a "sonic color line", fixing US citizenship to "white sonic identity" but also eventually evoking the protest of those whose music went unheard.

These cases of virtual exclusion of minorities from the national media landscape underline our argument that the expression of human rights through music and sound cannot only be found in those moments when they are explicitly announced or staged as such. More often than not, they may be found on an implicit level as well. The historian trying to identify audio-based articulations of human rights, therefore, needs to step beyond the horizon of official human rights documents and declarations and into the everyday culture of sound, including archived radio or television broadcasts as well as song recordings, to excavate "the sound of human rights" – and their manifold contestations.

VI. Da capo: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights concerts

So, what does this all mean when applied to the scenario of the United Nations as outlined in the passage at the beginning of this essay? First of all, what we see on the stages of Carnegie Hall, the General Assembly, and then in the Palais de Nations in Geneva is the attempt to attribute specific emotional meaning to a set of demands that is, for the most part, understood in political and legal terms. These performances show us how musical performance and musical identity not merely reflected but, indeed, anticipated a larger contestation over human rights, one that was to materialise on the popular level a

[100] *Martin Stokes*, The Arabesk Debate. Music and Musicians in Modern Turkey, 1992.

[101] *Stoever* (fn. 81).

decade later. We see how actors strove and indeed haggled over how to formulate an emotional vision of human rights – and over who would do the formulating. And we also see how that emotional formulation of human rights – so homogenous in the 1940s and 1950s, then so cacophonic, so diverse, so shared in the 1960s and early 1970s – eventually retreated to what it once had been: the music of the European Enlightenment and the Romantics. This is another way of saying that the musical vision and articulation of human rights, at least on the stage of the United Nations, took a moment to balloon into a *multilingua franca* across the globe, only then to morph back into the canon of Western universalism. This surprising if short-lived trajectory foreshadowed a development marking the present: total compartmentalisation of the human rights discourse on the global level, in which each actor and each group has its own version of human rights yet without much reference to related "canons" of rights discourse – think the Cairo Declaration in 1990; think China's "alternative vision" of human rights and its explicit welcome to the establishment of the Human Rights Council in 2006; think Venezuelan president Nicolas Maduro's infamous candidacy for the Human Rights Council in 2019 and his resulting tenure for the coming two years.

Second, the example reveals how an emphasis on the two research venues proposed above, "Aesthetics and Affect" as well as "Actors and Stages", can help historians and musicologists to work in tandem and study how a specific set of musical productions since 1949 has both championed and criticised the postwar discourse on human rights. Since 1949, both human rights and their contestations have been articulated via music and musical practices on stages chosen by the General Assembly across regions and genres. The settings, the participating actors, the sound displayed, and the aesthetical framework chosen differed, as did the means of distribution and publication. Thus, the example of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights anniversary concerts shows that music served and, indeed, continues to serve as a language and a forum to imagine the promotion and contestation of human rights on an emotional level, however contested. That language not only reflected but popularised human rights protests. It anticipated global activism by more than a decade.

On a more general level, linking the history of music to the history of human rights can help us identify avenues through which actors articulated the promotion and contestation of human rights by emotional, including nonverbal, means. It reveals how actors contextualised and responded to the promises and challenges in musical practices and performances over the course of the second half of the twentieth century – and how audiences and social communities reacted to such aesthetic visions. It also shows that sometimes, no actors or agency in favour of – or opposed to – certain political agendas are needed at all for music to become involved in human rights issues. At the same time, the nexus between music and human rights history identifies some alternative visions produced and promoted in specific locales at different times by means of aesthetic expression or silencing (for example, the detention or even execution of artists) and examines instances of dehumanisation in the global-local context, including music as an instrument of censorship, denial, and torture. Lastly, musical expressions or denials of equal human rights are also often performed or "staged" rather implicitly, as in the exclusion of certain minority music on national television or radio programmes. Here, the perpetual question is

whose music is represented and whose is not, who is granted the right and privilege to have a voice to be heard in public, who is authorised to participate in practices of aesthetic or cultural expression and who is not? Since the right or freedom to "speak" to the public always and necessarily implies a listening audience, this latter aspect also entails another right beyond that of voice: that of the freedom of listening.[102] Who exactly is addressed or present as the "listening public", and who is denied the right of access to stages or media as a listener? In other words, how do the distributed sound worlds of a geographically circumscribed territory, such as a nation-state, create virtual exclusions – read inequalities – of and within certain communities?

On a meta-level, studying political history through music and sound triggers an original shift in theoretical knowledge, expands our set of instruments of investigation, and, most importantly, enhances our understanding of how political power actually works. Political power is never merely an object of desire, a way to make others follow orders, nor is it exercised exclusively through governments, organisations, institutions, and human actors in general. Political power and political contestation are both lodged in sound, ranging from audiovisual manifestations of divine order and endowment over the sound of marching boots to the cries associated with pain, torture, and death. Music's ability to affect and generate symbolic orders, feelings, structures of subjectivity, shared (communal) social experiences, and interpersonal relationships allows us to hear the contested and cacophonic sounds of human rights.

The story of the UDHR concerts, by the way, is not yet history. In December 2023, the United Nations celebrated the 75th anniversary of the UDHR, at the Alhambra Hall in Geneva, Switzerland. The event included "world-class talent from every continent", among these UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador *Angélique Kidjo* and Ukrainian violinist *Yelyzaveta Zaitseva*. In more than one way, the gig bore more resemblance to the UDHR anniversary concerts in the 1960s and 70s than before and after, as it strove hard to portray the Declaration of Human Rights in a fashion both diverse and unanimous. Thus, the story continues: After a period of silence, musical diversity is back on the UDHR stage. And one can only hope that it will not take another 25 years for the next concert to celebrate and remind us of what is arguably the most central document serving as a global road map for the rights of every individual in the world.

[102] *Kate Lacey*, Listening Publics. The Politics and Experience of Listening in the Media Age, 2013, 165.