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Contemporary Music Documenting the Nazi Terror: Steve Reich's *Different Trains*

ABSTRACT

Steve Reich's *Different Trains* for string quartet and tape (1988) can be considered as one of the most unique pieces in the history of twentieth century music. The importance of this composition is demonstrated by such features as: 1) the documentary nature of the work recording 20th-century history, 2) the autobiographical character of the work, 3) the introduction of the theme of the Holocaust, 4) his innovative compositional technique, based on some new technology.

In *Different Trains*, the composer made a breakthrough in his compositional technique. The music of this piece is derived from the melody of speech: one can hear spoken samples of different people, including three Jews who survived the Holocaust, recorded on tape. This novel compositional procedure was then applied by Reich in the video-operas *The Cave* and *Three Tales*. *Different Trains*, composed for the famous Kronos Quartet and honoured with a Grammy Award, enthralled generations of listeners with its melodious and euphonic sound, particularly characteristic of the first and third part of the oeuvre. On the other hand, the dramatic character of the music in the middle section, entitled *Europe – During the War*, reflects the tragic fate of the Jews during World War II.

KEY WORDS

documentary-themed musical piece, Holocaust, innovative compositional technique, speech melody

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Steve Reich's *Different Trains* is one of the most significant works in the output of this great American composer and can be considered as one of the

most unique pieces in the history of 20th century music¹. The importance of this piece is demonstrated by such features as: 1) the documentary nature of the work recording 20th-century history, 2) the autobiographical character of the work, 3) the introduction of the theme of the Holocaust, 4) innovative compositional technique, 5) the heralding of a new, original vocal style, which was developed in Reich's later video-operas. *Different Trains*, commissioned by Betty Freeman for the Kronos Quartet, composed in 1988, is a piece for string quartet (playing live in concert) and tape with recorded parts of three separate string quartets and the recorded voices of various people, the sounds of American and European trains of the 1930s and '40s, sirens and warning bells. This composition was given its world premiere on 2 November 1988 at the Queen Elizabeth Hall in London by the Kronos Quartet and was published by Boosey and Hawkes. In 1989 Steve Reich received a Grammy Award for this piece in the category of Best Contemporary Composition.

THE MUSICAL PIECE AS A DOCUMENTARY

In *Different Trains*, Steve Reich established a new musical genre – a documentary-themed musical piece, based on contemporary topics or those derived from 20th century history, in which elements of everyday sounds are used: primarily speech, which often drives the melodic structures, but also sounds made by various objects characteristic of contemporary civilisation. For example, in *Different Trains* the train sounds – transferred to tape with the use of samplers and a computer – are quoted and in another Reich composition, *City Life*, we can hear prerecorded car horns, car alarms, air brakes and pile drivers, played on two samplers. The genesis of this new genre was born of many factors. Firstly, it follows from the rather innovative musical tradition of concrete music, established by French composer Pierre Schaeffer at the turn of the forties and fifties (he introduced the term *musique concrète* in 1950).

¹ Richard Taruskin in his great synthesis of the late twentieth century music underlines the vast resonance of this piece and the use of new technology: 'The sample-based composition best known to audiences at century's end – the first "classic" of the new technology – was 'Different Trains' (1988), a late or "post-minimalist" composition by Steve Reich.' S. Reich, *Music in the Late Twentieth Century*, The Oxford History of Western Music, New York 2010, p. 503. Christopher Fox writes about the unique character of the tape part in this piece: 'To any listener, whether Reich aficionado or not, the most immediately striking aspect of 'Different Trains' is the contribution made by the tape part.' Ch. Fox, *Steve Reich's 'Different Trains'*, "Tempo" 1990, No. 172, p. 2.

The works of such composers as Pierre Schaeffer and Pierre Henry, created in this genre, included various noises, real-world sounds, sounds of natural origin, and also instruments and human voices recorded on a tape, arranged in a kind of a musical collage. Secondly, it also has one foot in the tradition of visual arts: in the idea of the ready-made, introduced and represented in Marcel Duchamp's works, where everyday objects become works of art.

Speech was used in stage music, like singspiels and vaudevilles, and also in vocal-instrumental works with a reciter or a narrator, as in the famous Arnold Schönberg's *A Survivor from Warsaw*. However, the treatment of speech in those works did not have organic link with their melody, rhythm, harmony and tempo, as is the case in Steve Reich's scores. Only in Scott Johnson's composition *John Somebody* of 1982 are speech samples used as a basis for the music. They are also repeated, similarly to Reich's scores. However, *Different Trains* was not the first piece in which Reich introduced speech as a musical element of a composition. This was preceded by his early compositions for tape from the sixties: *It's Gonna Rain* and *Come Out*, constructed of short speech phrases, set against themselves in a phase shifting technique, a new compositional procedure invented by Reich.² Also earlier Reich compositions for the tape from the sixties (now withdrawn by the composer) were close to the genre of *musique concrète*. The first was a track to the film *The Plastic Haircut* (directed by Robert Nelson) composed in 1963, in which Reich quoted the recorded voices of famous American athletes, such as Babe Ruth and Jack Dempsey, taken from a recording called 'Greatest Moments in Sport'. The second one was a three-minute long collage piece called *Livelihood* which consisted of some material recorded by the composer while he, in his youth, took a short-lived job as a taxi driver. The musical material consisted of various sounds, including the voices of different people, slamming of a car door and street noises, recorded on a tape.³

Different Trains starts a new musical genre, which was continued by Steve Reich in both of his video operas: *The Cave* and *Three Tales*, created in collaboration with video artist Beryl Korot, which have a documentary feel by using interviews with different people recorded on video tape and also

² Steve Reich confirms a link between those pieces and *Different Trains*, composed more than twenty years later, in the following statement: '«Different Trains» for string quartet and tape begins a new way of composing that has its roots in my early taped speech pieces «It's Gonna Rain» and «Come Out».' S. Reich, *Writings on Music 1965–2000*, ed. with an introduction P. Hillier, New York 2002, p. 151.

³ P. Hillier, *Introduction*, [in:] S. Reich, op. cit., p. 11–13.

(in *Three Tales*) historical footage and photographs. The theme of *The Cave* is the story of Abraham and his family, which turns into a starting point for the composer to immerse himself into a deep philosophical and sociological reflection on the role of religion in the life of contemporary Jews, Arabs and Americans. In *Three Tales*, in spite of using documentary material, in both the first and second act an element of narration can be observed, suggesting a kind of 'tale' through which Reich points out the dangers connected with the evolution of modern technology. However, the accent in *Three Tales* falls on the third act, *Dolly*, which hardly contains any narrative aspects at all. There are fragments of many interviews, made by Reich and Korot with both scientists and journalists. The two main problems brought up in this act are: genetic engineering (symbolized by Dolly the sheep) and the scientists' research connected with creating artificial intelligence (embodied by the robot Kismet). Other Steve Reich works of a documentary nature include *City Life* and one of his latest compositions, *WTC 9/11*.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL CHARACTER OF THE WORK. THE INTRODUCTION OF THE THEME OF THE HOLOCAUST

Different Trains can be interpreted partly as an autobiographical work.⁴ Referring to Mieczysław Tomaszewski's conception presented in the article "Momenty autobiograficzne, autoekspresywne i autorefleksyjne dzieła muzyczne-go"⁵ (although narrowed by its author first and foremost to romantic music), in the textual layer of *Different Trains* 'self-reflective moments'⁶ can be seen. They present "reflexes that are the reflections of an author's spiritual experiences,"⁷ associated by Tomaszewski with the Schenkerian background level of a musical piece⁸. The author connects the self-reflective moments of a compo-

⁴ Paul Hillier writes about Steve Reich's *Different Trains* as 'the most autobiographical of his works', in his introduction. Ibidem, p. 7.

⁵ M. Tomaszewski, *Momenty autobiograficzne, autoekspresywne i autorefleksyjne dzieła muzycznego*, [in:] idem, *Muzyka w dialogu ze słowem*, Kraków 2003, p. 17–33.

⁶ 'Momenty autorefleksyjne' (ibidem, p. 29).

⁷ 'Refleksy, czyli odbłaski doświadczeń duchowych autora' (ibidem).

⁸ The other important aspects of the presence of the author in a piece, listed by Tomaszewski, are: 'autobiographical moments (momenty autobiograficzne)', documenting the events of an empirical life, connected with the facts written in a foreground level of a musical piece (i.e. in its title), and 'self-expressive moments (momenty autoekspresy-

sition among others with the transference of personal and universal messages. These aspects can be found in *Different Trains*, a musical piece, connecting some personal memories of the composer with an universal, anti-war message.

Steve Reich explains the genesis of *Different Trains* as follows:

The idea for the piece comes from my childhood. When I was one year old, my parents separated. My mother moved to Los Angeles and my father stayed in New York.⁹ Since they arranged divided custody, I traveled back and forth by train frequently between New York and Los Angeles from 1939 to 1942, accompanied by my governess. While these trips were exciting and romantic at the time, I now look back and think that, if I had been in Europe during this period, as a Jew I would have had to ride on very different trains. With this in mind, I wanted to make a piece that would accurately reflect the whole situation.¹⁰

The composer makes an additional remark in an interview published in K. Robert Schwarz's book *Minimalists*:

You know the famous photograph of the little kid in Warsaw ghetto with his hands up in the air? He looks just like me! I thought to myself, there but for the grace of God – I was in America, very sheltered and very fortunate, but had I been across the ocean, I would have been on another train. I would have been taken to Poland and I would be dead.¹¹

The aim of the composer was thus to reflect with documentary precision two main themes connected with historical facts and events that happened during the years of World War II. The first theme – introduced in the first and the third part of the piece is associated with a joyful memory from the composer's childhood of the experience of long-lasting four day train trips throughout America, from New York to the West, that he used to set off on twice a year.¹² Reich enhances the optimistic atmosphere of the first movement, entitled *America: Before the War* by using the rattling of wheels and carriages and 'jolly' old train whis-

wne)', which are connected with the emotional life of the author, reaching into the deeper reality and associated with the middle-ground level of a piece (ibidem, p. 24, 26–27).

⁹ Steve Reich's father, Leonard was a lawyer. His mother, June Carroll, was a singer and a lyricist. She wrote lyrics and music for Broadway musicals and took part in the Broadway musical *New Faces of 1952*.

¹⁰ S. Reich, op. cit., p. 151.

¹¹ Fragment of Steve Reich's comment, in: K. R. Schwarz, *Minimalists*, London 1996, p. 95.

¹² P. Hillier, *Introduction*, [in:] S. Reich, op. cit., p. 7.

ties. As Joshua Kosman observes, “The first of the work’s three sections [...], provides an idyllic bit of nostalgia.”¹³ The climate of America in the early forties is evoked also by using a phrase ‘crack train from New York’ spoken by Lawrence Davis, a retired Pullman porter, containing a language feature characteristic of the forties – the word ‘crack’, meaning ‘best’ in those times. Besides Lawrence Davis, in the first part the voice of Reich’s governess, Virginia, is also used.

The second topic is dramatically and abruptly contrasted with the first one, because in the second movement: *Europe: During the War* the composer introduces the theme of the Holocaust. The voices of Rachella, Paul and Rachel, some Holocaust survivors, captured on tape, are used in this section.¹⁴ The spoken phrases relate a concise account of the story of the Holocaust; they often consist of some very sharp information, documenting the major, well-known facts about World War II, especially those connected with the Nazi terror against the Jews in Europe and the nightmarish reality of Nazi concentration camps, for example: ‘the Germans walked in’, ‘walked into Holland’, ‘they shaved us’, ‘they tattooed a number on our arm.’ Richard Taruskin underlines that the exceptionality of this piece lies in its objectivity, opening up a field for the listener to ponder:

Different Trains is almost unique among artistic memorials to the Holocaust in its successful avoidance of pomposity and false comfort. There are no villains and no heroes, just the perception that while this happened here, that happened there (or, as Reich told an interviewer, «There but for the grace of God...»), and a stony invitation to reflect.¹⁵

The theme connected directly with the Holocaust appears in a phrase, spoken by Rachella, at the end of the second movement: “Flames going up to the sky – it was smoking.” The music in the second part of the piece has a different character from the euphonic harmonies coloured by joyful sounds of the train whistles in the first section. The middle section starts with the foreboding sound of sirens, which were a common element of the audiosphere of countries occupied by the Germans during World War II. This sound accompanies

¹³ J. Kosman, *Different Trains’ Runs on Many Tracks*, review of the recording *Steve Reich Different Trains; Electric Counterpoint*, Kronos Quartet; Pat Metheny, guitar, Elektra/Nonesuch 79176, San Francisco Chronicle, 28 May 1989, p. 13.

¹⁴ Steve Reich used in the piece testimonies of Holocaust survivors from the Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library and from the Holocaust Collection of the American Jewish Committee’s William E. Wiener Oral History Library.

¹⁵ R. Taruskin, op. cit., p. 503.

the text, in which the important date of the German invasion of Holland is marked: '1940.' The harmony in the second movement contains dissonances (e.g. the tritone) and chromatic alterations. In Steve Reich's words, "the harmonies are generally more chromatic and «darker» in the second movement."¹⁶ The culminating point of the second movement is its ending, with the words: "Flames going up in the sky, it was smoking," with repeated chosen phrases from this longer phrase. These words are accompanied by very long sustained G minor seventh chord, coloured by dissonant C and A. This chord lasts from tact 319 to 384 and is followed by a general pause. This is the most moving moment of the whole composition. The speech melody of the phrase used in this fragment – consisting mostly of semitones, is a reference to the rhetoric figure *pathopoeia*, symbolising suffering. K. Robert Schwarz writes about the expression of the second movement as follows:

[...] the second movement, «Europe – During the War», is dominated by the wail of sirens and the horror of Nazi cattle cars. At its climax – when a survivor recalls Auschwitz, with its «flames going up to the sky» – the unrelenting pulse suddenly ceases, and a sustained chord of shocking simplicity fades into the distance.¹⁷

At the beginning of the third movement: *After the War*, Reich introduces the technique of a canon, which is typical of his musical style. In his early tape works from the 1960s *It's Gonna Rain* and *Come Out*, and also instrumental works such as *Piano Phase* and *Violin Phase*, he used a phase-shifting technique, that resembled a canon. He incorporated canons in many of his later works, such as for example: *Tehillim* (1981), *The Four Sections* (1987) and *Electric Counterpoint* (1987). Canonic structures are widely used in the musical development of the third movement of *Different Trains*. At the beginning of this movement, there are two separate two-part canons in unison: one is played by two violas and the second – by two violins. There is also a short, sharp musical motif, played on the cello, imitating the melody of a speech phrase introduced slightly later: "and the war was over."

In this section the composer sets the two main themes of the piece against each other and the recorded voices of Paul, Rachella, Mr. Davis and Virginia appear again. There is an important phrase spoken by Mr. Davis: "but today, they're all gone." Richard Taruskin explains the double meaning of this phrase as follows:

¹⁶ *Answers to Questions about Different Trains (1994)*, S. Reich interviewed by W. Gratzner, [in:] S. Reich, op. cit., p. 182.

¹⁷ K. R. Schwarz, op. cit., p. 96.

The understated climax comes in the third section, when the train historian's voice is heard matter-of-factly remarking, «Today, they're all gone.» Remembering his voice from the first section, one knows that he was talking about the American transcontinental trains of the 1930s and 1940s. But remembering the second section, one cannot help relating his comment to the Jewish children, too. Both a synthesis of the subject matter and an effective musical close, the moment is haunting.¹⁸

Steve Reich, when asked by Rebecca Y. Kim whether he had reservations about setting his personal experiences against the historical backdrop of the Holocaust, answered: “To consider using the Holocaust as subject material in any way, shape, or form is so inherently... not just difficult, but impossible. [...] The documentary nature of the piece is essential to what it is.”¹⁹ He explained that he was using the voices of people recounting what had happened to them, and transcribing their speech melody into composition. The horror of wartime in Europe was thus too tremendous to become the topic of a musical piece, so the composer made his musical piece resemble a reportage captured in a superficially artistic form, including short ‘interviews’ with eye-witnesses of those days of terror.

Summing up, the documentary features of *Different Trains*, connected with the theme of Nazi occupation in Europe and the theme of the Holocaust, can be perceived in many aspects. Firstly, the real voices of three Holocaust survivors, giving testimony to what they had been through formed a kind of ‘narration’ (with their parts recorded on the tape) in the musical piece. Secondly, the way the phrases were spoken by them formed a basis for the music, primarily the melody. The timbre and intonation of the fragments spoken by them reveal much about their emotions running through the content of those spoken fragments. Lastly, a musical allusion to the audiosphere of occupied Europe was created through the sound of sirens.

INNOVATIVE COMPOSITIONAL TECHNIQUE. HERALDING A NEW VOCAL STYLE.

In his *magnum opus*, the composer made a breakthrough in his compositional technique and heralded a new vocal style which was developed in later works. *Different Trains* is not a vocal-instrumental work in the traditional sense, because it does not contain any singing voices. However a vocal ele-

¹⁸ R. Taruskin, op. cit., p. 503.

¹⁹ R. Y. Kim, *From New York to Vermont. Conversation with Steve Reich*, [online], <http://www.steverreich.com/articles/NY-VT.html> [15.01.2013].

ment is present there, because speech fragments are quoted in this work and they play an essential part in the musical development of the piece.

Reich's interest in the human voice dates back to his early works. The composer sought to reflect in his music the rhythm and melodic qualities of the American language. This objective was achieved in his famous works for tape: *It's Gonna Rain* (1965) and *Come Out* (1966). In these compositions, repeated phrases gradually shift out of phase with each other. At that time, Reich was interested in speech itself, and its melodic quality. In 1974 he wrote:

[...] what seemed interesting to me was that a tape recorder recorded real sounds like speech, as a motion picture camera records real images. If one could present that speech without altering its pitch or timbre, one would keep the original emotional power that speech has while intensifying its melody and meaning through repetition and rhythm.²⁰

The genesis of Reich's idea of incorporating speech to his music lies in his interest in works of William Carlos Williams (1883–1963). This American poet was also a doctor and he practised as a pediatrician in New Jersey and so had frequent contact with everyday American speech, from which he drew inspiration in his poetic style.²¹ Although incorporating speech in music was not a new idea, the treatment of speech in Steve Reich's early works was truly innovative. He intended to preserve in these works the natural rhythm and melody of words spoken, and also their emotional power. Music was a vehicle to emphasize speech melody and also to stress the meaning of the short phrases spoken by their repetition. Recorded speech was thus a fundamental element of both these compositions. These works, characterized by a simplicity of means and ascetic style, were milestones in the evolution of contemporary music and were early examples of minimalism in music.

In his works from the 70s such as *Drumming*, Reich used human voices in an instrumental way. For example, in *Drumming* the voices literally imitated the sound of the percussion instruments used in this piece: marimbas and glockenspiels. Steve Reich wanted to obtain the precise imitation of the sound made by specific instruments²². Therefore, he chose two female voices to imitate sound of the marimbas in the second part of the piece. He wrote, that "For the marimbas, the female voice was needed using consonants like

²⁰ S. Reich, op. cit., p. 20.

²¹ K. Potter, *Four Musical Minimalists: La Monte Young, Terry Riley, Steve Reich, Philip Glass*, Cambridge 2000, p. 165–166.

²² S. Reich, op. cit., p. 64.

‘b’ and ‘d’ with a more or less ‘u’ as in ‘you’ vowel sound.”²³ Then not only the high register of the voice was needed, but also an original kind of vocalization invented by the composer, using specific voiced consonants (‘b’ and ‘d’), each one connected with a sound close to the vowel ‘u’, to obtain a type of singing that best resembled the sound made by marimbas. The parts written for the glockenspiels in the third part of *Drumming* were so high that it was impossible to sing. Steve Reich used whistling instead to imitate the sounds of these instruments. However, when musicians played on glockenspiels in their highest registers, whistling was not possible. Therefore the piccolo flute had to be used instead of the human voice. In the fourth part of the piece he combined all these vocal techniques used in the previous two parts.

In the 80s Steve Reich composed important vocal-instrumental works with text: *Tehillim* and *The Desert Music*. These were the first works, in which he used the human voice in a more traditional way. But it was in the famous *Different Trains* (1988), for string quartet and tape, that Reich resumed writing works where melody, rhythm, tempo, and harmony were derived from the melody of speech. He created an original style, which was characterized by recordings of short verbal statements (using a digital sampling keyboard) as a basis for the music. This tendency continued in Reich’s video-operas *The Cave* (1988–1993) and *Three Tales* (2003) for solo voices and an ensemble, in which his new vocal style was fully established. The main features of this style are: speech as a basis for the melody, harmony and rhythm as well as singing in *non vibrato* style. In *The Cave* Reich not only does he introduce autonomous singed fragments, but also often links the sung parts with the spoken ones. In this opera the sung parts repeat the texts of the spoken fragments and precisely imitate or merely resemble their melody and rhythm (cases in which they imitate only the text, without referring to the melody or rhythm of speech, are rare).

Although in *Different Trains* no singing voices were used, the music of this work, like in the later opera *The Cave*, is closely connected to speech melody. At the core of the innovative technique of using spoken phrases there are two important compositional procedures: the first is the minimalistic technique of repetition. The repetitions of a spoken phrase (with its melody doubled simultaneously by an instrument) intermingle with a precise, repeated instrumental imitation of the melody of this phrase (or a motif or a longer structure extracted from it). Thanks to this procedure the composer can avoid too many changes of tempo (with such changes inevitable in such

²³ Ibidem.

a kind of piece). Although the tempo in *Different Trains* changes frequently, it is predominantly fast (it oscillates between $\text{♩} = 69$ and $\text{♩} = 194$).

At the heart of the second procedure is the idea of imitation (which had already been used by Reich, although in a different way, in his previous work *Drumming*). This idea is present in all three movements of the piece, although it is particularly dominant in the musical development of the final and third section. The string instruments (mostly viola and cello) precisely imitate the melody of the spoken voices (usually the melody of those phrases is played by instruments after which the spoken phrase is introduced). The first and the second movements of *Different Trains* are composed in a homophonic texture, where the string quartet parts constitute a kind of harmonic background for speech melodies imitated by solo string instruments. The intervals of fourth and fifth dominate in the harmony of the background section (in the second movement there are also intervals of minor second and tritone). However, in the melodic parts (based on speech melodies), the intervals natural to human speech, such as semitones, major seconds and thirds, play a major role. In the third movement the musical texture is based on the imitation technique widely used by the composer. This last section of the piece is masterly crafted, with the use of both free imitation and canons, and this section is more rooted in speech melody than the other movements of the piece, because the melody and rhythm of the instrumental contrapuntal lines have an audible connection with the melody and rhythm of speech phrases that are used in this movement. The composer uses homophonic texture only in two consecutive fragments of the third movement (tacts 223–432), where he introduces spoken phrases that were already used in the first section ('from New York to Los Angeles', 'one of the fastest trains'). In all three movements of the piece, the string instruments imitate the whistles of the trains, playing along with their sounds. In the motoric string quartet parts, Reich introduces also a technique, which is based on the imitation of a paradiddle scheme used by percussion players.

Similarly to *It's Gonna Rain* and *Come Out*, Reich used in *Different Trains* spoken phrases which are generally short and concise. But the treatment of those phrases in Reich's contemporary masterpiece is a little different from their use in his early pieces. The austere phrases, constantly repeated, characteristic of the early minimalistic pieces are now gone. Instead, the phrases introduced in *Different Trains* by the composer are carefully chosen, considering their melodic quality and – above all – their meaning (they were transformed by digital samplers).²⁴ The melody derived from speech is often based

²⁴ Steve Reich used Casio FZ-1 and FZ-10M Digital Samplers in the piece.

on short rhythmical values and sometimes based on a complicated rhythm. For example, rhythmical complexities can be found in the speech melody of the following phrases: ‘the crack train from New York’, with its characteristic triola, and the phrase ‘from New York to Los Angeles’, where a dotted rhythm and also small rhythmical values of thirty-second notes are used. The composer contrasts this kind of diverse, original rhythm characteristic of the musical phrases derived from American speech with the motoric accompaniment of a string quartet, based on regular pulse and equal rhythmical values. Not only *Different Trains*, but also other Reich compositions from the eighties are characterized by the growing role of a melodic factor in the musical structure (e.g. *Tehillim*, *The Four Sections*).

Steve Reich explains the expression of quoted spoken phrases in *Different Trains* and his other works incorporating speech as follows:

The particular voices of my governess, the porter, and the Holocaust survivors in *Different Trains* tell the actual story of a period in history from just before to just after World War II. There is no singer’s «interpretation» but, rather, this: people bearing witness to their own lives. Their speech melody is the unpremeditated organic expression of the events they lived through. The same can be said of the Pentecostal street preacher in ‘It’s Gonna Rain’, the boy accused of murder in ‘Come Out’, as well as all the Israelis, Palestinians, and Americans in ‘The Cave’. As Janáček said; «speech melodies are windows into peoples’ souls.»²⁵

Zbigniew Skowron stressed also the synthetic character of *Different Trains*, pointing to a multilevel synthesis of three components: the performance of the string quartet, its previously recorded version, and the concrete effects. He writes:

This situation, reminding at the first time of an assemblage, however, does not open the field for chance action. On the contrary, the levels of this whole are strictly coordinated, like the lines of counterpoint. The perfection of this interplay makes the technical side of the piece paradoxically unnoticeable and gives way to various shades of musical expression.²⁶

²⁵ S. Reich, op. cit., p. 198–199; L. Janáček, *Uncollected Essays on Music*, selected, ed., and trans. M. Zemanova, London 1989, p. 121–122.

²⁶ ‘Sytuacja ta, przypominająca w pierwszej chwili *assemblage*, nie otwiera jednakże pola dla działania przypadku. Przeciwnie, płaszczyzny tej całości są ze sobą ściśle skoordynowane, niczym linie kontrapunkcyjne. Doskonałość tego współgrynia sprawia, iż strona techniczna utworu staje się – paradoksalnie – niezauważalna i ustępuje miejsca rozmaitym odcieniom ekspresji muzycznej’ (Z. Skowron, *Nowa muzyka amerykańska*, Kraków 1995, p. 377).

Different Trains, since the date of its premiere has enthralled generations of listeners with its melodious and euphonic sound, especially characteristic of the first and third part of the oeuvre. On the other hand, the dramatic nature of the music in the middle part, entitled Europe – During the War, reflects the tragic fate of the Jews during World War II. *Different Trains* is not only a landmark in the development of music in the late 20th century, but also stands as a documentary testimony of the Holocaust, presented in the form of a musical composition. Alongside such musical masterpieces as Arnold Schönberg's *A Survivor from Warsaw* and Benjamin Britten's *War Requiem*, it is one of the most significant musical compositions referring to the topic of World War II.

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