KAPITTEL 16

Creating Spiritual Spaces Through the Music of Arvo Pärt and Ljubica Marić

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Abstract: This chapter explores music as a spiritual experience outside the traditionally religious context of the liturgy. In doing so, it raises questions regarding the limitations of some modern conceptions of spirituality and suggests a new approach to how we might understand spirituality between the Church and the concert hall. This is studied through the compositional approaches of Ljubica Marić and Arvo Pärt, who synthesize elements deriving from Byzantine chant with modern expressions. Through exploring the idea of "spiritual spaces" sensed in Marić's and Pärt's music in the context of modernism and spirituality, this chapter will offer a new understanding of spirituality through music.

Keywords: Arvo Pärt, Ljubica Marić, spirituality, spiritual spaces, modernism

Introduction

Compositional practices in the Western classical tradition have long since "resembled the quest of science" (Andreopoulos, 2000, p. 81). This predominantly secular notion of music is often affiliated with concepts of material and invention. Yet, over recent decades, many composers have expressly detached themselves from outwardly materialist and secular concepts of music and engaged with spirituality and religion, exploring music as a powerful symbolic form with which to enrich human life. This

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has, in turn, brought about a reconsideration of ideas that belong to the domain of religion and spirituality.

Andreopoulos (2000) and Scholl and Van Maas (2016) are among the scholars who have thoroughly explored these compositional approaches and the interrelation between contemporary music and spirituality. In this chapter, I will explore music as a spiritual experience outside the traditionally religious context of the liturgy and examine contemporary musical forms through which spiritual and religious concerns can be reflected. The return of the sacred (Andreopoulos, 2000) in contemporary classical music is both seen as a spiritual phenomenon and an artistic trend, principally within a generation of composers who are often identified with the "new simplicity" movement. In a time in which spirituality is seen as a concept, I intend not solely to explain the spiritual *in* music, but to engage with how thinking *through* music can expand perspectives on spirituality. While examining the relationship between modernism and spirituality in an exploration of Arvo Pärt's ideas and the methods of Ljubica Marić – who, similarly to Pärt, employs elements from Byzantine chant in the melodic and harmonic structure of paraliturgical works – I will discuss how archaic spiritual ideas can be synthesized with contemporary expressions, through an approach which seeks to transcend conventional thinking.

Music and spirituality

How is spirituality sensed through contemporary music and how can we reveal and access the dimensions of its meaning? Music is a powerful medium for communication that can enable performers and listeners to interact and to experience musical meaning and understanding through various interpretive processes. At the same time, the perception of meaning in music can be ambiguous, due to the contextual and multifarious nature of the musical experience. Maeve Louise Heaney (2014, p. 365) points out that the complexity of the embodied and enacted faith can be seen on the same level as the perception of musical meaning – the words pronounced during prayer can come alive in and through their performance, while reflecting on the multi-faceted nature of music can help

us somehow grasp that complexity, or even experience it. As Lawrence Kramer (2011, p. 12) suggests, meaning can be seen as performed rather than discovered. In a similar vein, Marcel Cobussen (2008) regards spirituality as more complex than a fixed term that can be defined and transmitted as a concept. He argues that it is *through* music that an experience with "a spirituality that can never be contained, captured, or caught by any fixed pair of terms" becomes possible, and views spirituality as an open space "between and beyond dual oppositions" (pp. 36–37).

What can we say about the meaning of spirituality? While defining spirituality is not the main concern of this paper, a brief account of its origins is of interest for further discussions. The notion of *spirituality* evokes divergent experiences and understandings, and opens a space for personal interpretation. It can be defined as "the state or quality of being dedicated to God, religion, or spiritual things or values, especially as contrasted with material or temporal ones" (Collins Dictionary, 2010). The term is most commonly associated with religion, with reference to early Christian interpretation where spirituality is "directed towards the image of God" (Waajiman, 2002, p. 460) and "a life oriented towards the Holy Spirit" (Wong & Vinsky, 2009, p. 39). Expanded to include cognitive aspects of existence in the late Middle Ages, the notion has evolved in more recent times to include various religious traditions as well as a broader spectrum of subjective experiences, often described as an experience of a "sacred dimension" and in a context separate from organized religious institutions (Saucier & Skrzypińska, 2006, p. 74).

The notion of spirituality in contemporary music is often cited in relation to postmodernism and a perceived departure from the tendencies of modernism. While postmodernism and its suggested turn towards religion and spirituality is commonly seen as a reaction against the ideals of modernism, some scholars regard postmodernism as a part of the modern, concurrent with ongoing discourses, in which the question of spirituality and modernism can be situated. Cobussen (2008) also discusses the status of spirituality in relation to the modern and the postmodern, calling for a more nuanced understanding of the tripartite division between music, spirituality and postmodernism (pp. 34–36).

The multivalent agency of Arvo Pärt's music

A discussion about spirituality and its relation to musical modernism necessarily involves Arvo Pärt, regarded by Andrew Shenton (2012) as "by all criteria an extremely successful composer" and widely recognized for the spiritual qualities of his music and its multivalent agency and appeal (pp. 1–2). In recent years, a number of scholarly studies have explored how the complex musical agency and spiritual experience of Pärt's music can be articulated and evaluated. Robert Scholl (2012) writes that Pärt's music embraces both a secular spirituality (understood as a personal experience of, communication with, or belief in the divine), as well as such experiences within the context of institutional religion (p. 140). He further refers to the space between "conformity and unbelief" in the philosophy of Charles Taylor (2007, p. 302), in which the multivalent agency of Pärt's music can be situated as essential to its communicative power and appeal. In terms of modernity, while Josiah Fisk (1994, pp. 394–412) understands the spirituality in Pärt's music as opposed to modern ideals, Scholl (2012, p. 141) speaks about a dualist conception of modernity and spirituality, in which both have represented a search for an understanding of God as much as a resistance to the constrictions (doctrine and dogma) of formal religion.

In his gradual departure from what might be termed modernist ideals – following the completion of *Credo* in 1968 and several years of silence, which Hillier (1996) describes as a "creative death that gradually arose in him a search for an entirely new way to proceed" (p. 64) – Pärt embarked on a new trajectory with the invention of *tintinnabuli*. The technique which, as the name indicates, is based on the resonance of bells, deals with ways of articulating the triad, essential to Pärt, so that it remains audible, while it subsequently projects the harmonics that arise around it and allows melodic activity. The result is the creation of movement within stasis. Rodda (1995) quotes Pärt's own words:

> *Tintinnabulation* is an area I sometimes wander into when I am searching for answers – in my life, my music, my work. In my dark hours, I have the certain feeling that everything outside this one thing has no meaning. The complex and many-faceted only confuses me, and I must search for unity. What is it, this one

> thing, and how do I find my way to it? Traces of this perfect thing appear in many guises – and everything that is unimportant falls away. *Tintinnabulation* is like this … The three notes of a triad are like bells. And that is why I call it *tintinnabulation*. (p. 2)

The creation of *tintinnabuli*, first seen in the piano piece *Für Alina* (1976), sparked new forms of creativity in Pärt's music and a constantly present engagement with the question of the religious, most directly explored in his later works *Litany* (1994/6) and *Kanon Pokajanen* (1997), both of which contain a large-scale exploration of the Christian Orthodox ritual. In his analysis, Ivan Moody (2014, pp. 181–182) notes that *Litany* is scored for four solo voices, chamber choir and orchestra, with texts sat to the Prayers of St. John Crystotom for each hour of the day and night, usually found in private Orthodox prayer books and therefore of a personal, intimate nature. Moody (2014) further writes that Pärt treats the 24 concise texts in a way that preserves their intimacy, with transparent orchestral textures and quiet dynamics that allow the soloists to project the texts at low frequencies. The texts are arranged and linked into a continuous flow by instrumental figures, chords, or drones. Through the constant return of the melodic lines to the same note, and frequent recitative-like sections, the *tintinnabuli* technique is applied here in an innovative manner, to achieve continuity. Pärt's remarkable treatment of the text is also present in *Kanon Pokajanen*: a text which originates from the Orthodox hymn "Canon of Repentance to Our Lord Jesus Christ", sung acapella in Church Slavonic. Fr. Jillions' (2014) article points out that Pärt's own words bear witness of a powerful encounter with the text of the Canon itself:

> Many years ago, when I first became involved in the tradition of the Russian Orthodox Church, I came across a text that made a profound impression on me although I cannot have understood it at the time. It was the Canon of Repentance. Since then, I have often returned to these verses, slowly and arduously seeking to unfold their meaning. (p. 1)

Furthermore, one can note that Pärt describes the text as the defining element of the music and its structure, a view close to those of the Orthodox Church:

> It was this Canon that showed me clearly how much the choice of a language predetermines the character of a work – to such an extent in fact that the whole construction of the composition is subjugated to the text and its laws, if one allows the language to "make its music". (Restagno et al., 2012, p. 85)

In correspondence with Pärt's later *tintinnabuli* style, the melodies and harmonies of *Kanon Pokajanen* remain static and the piece is characterized by a simple, prayer-like atmosphere. This very aspect of Pärt's music could explain the growing interest in exploring his music as non-liturgical instrumental music with the potential for the transmission of both a "secular" spirituality and a religious Christian faith experience. On the back of the general popularity and significant scholarly interest, Pärt's music has also been criticized for its "new simplicity" and placed within the (sometimes pejorative) label "holy minimalism", due to its incomplexity of musical thought – a character dominantly defined as one breaking with modernist ideas and typical of postmodernism.

The most strikingly negative assessment of Pärt's work is to be found in Josiah Fisk's (1994) critique of "the New Simplists" (who also include John Tavener and Henryk Górecki), who situates Pärt's music in clear opposition to modernism (and earlier traditional musical forms) and questions whether there is anything that might be described as genuinely transcendental in the music:

> With the religious aspect we get closer to the nub of the problem. We are asked to accept that the New Simplists' elimination of the play of ideas in music isn't born of highhandedness, confusion or lack of ability. It is authorized by powers far beyond human comprehension. Their ignorance of musical wisdom is indeed deliberate, but justified, because it is nobly wrapped in the Spartan robe of self-denial. This may be a form of religiosity, but it is neither Eastern nor Medieval. In some ways it is closer to New Age spiritualism, with its intellectual flabbiness and fuzzy blend of platitudes from miscellaneous sources. (Fisk, 1994, p. 405)

At the other end of the scale, the Orthodox priest, composer and musicologist Ivan Moody (2014) makes an important point concerning the popular perception of Pärt's music as "spiritual": "Spiritual is a word often used as a synonym for 'vapidly ethereal', an idea that has nothing to do

with what one might conjecture most listeners to music would in fact conceive of as 'the spiritual'" (p. 182).

From a Christian point of view, the spiritual is to be found in the incarnate; it is not something vaguely or sentimentally religious. Moody (2014) points out that one of the problems in speaking of religious mysticism and the arts is that one is constantly subjected to a confusion between "a genuine aspiration towards the sacred and something that is often no more than romantic sentimentality" (p. 182). He observes how music can fulfil aurally the same function that an icon does visually, and refers to the words of St. John of Damascus (1980) in response to the iconoclast in the eighth century:

> We use all our senses to produce worthy images of Him, and we sanctify the noblest of the senses, which is that of sight. For just as words edify the ear, so also the image stimulates the eye. (p. 25)

Bearing in mind the incarnate conception of religious mysticism, he wonders whether music also can be a vehicle for "spirituality" or "mysticism" in a similarly incarnate way as proposed by St. John of Damascus, and states that the question can be answered positively in the case of Pärt (Moody, 2014, p. 183). When examining the popular term *mediation* in relation to (religious) spirituality, Pärt's own words paint a picture that might lead to the same conclusion:

> First of all, I admit to not knowing what mediation is, having only rather vague ideas about it. Mediation seems to me empty and colourless, something unidentifiable, a kind of liquid solution that becomes ever poorer in substance. This is the direction that mediation takes. I take another path: one proceeding from the incorporeal to the corporeal, in order to make the solution more concentrated. (Sætre, 2012, p. 249)

When Fisk (1994) writes that "the disconnection (in classical music) lies between the Modernists and their successors" (p. 396) and talks about "a small step from the failure to recognize the inner life of old music to the writing of new music that has no inner life" (p. 397), pointing at Pärt's new simplicity (a term that has little to do with the composer's own perception) and the "intentional absence of inherent musical substance" (p. 402), it is

evident that he speaks of a "mediated" rather than "concentrated" spirituality, and is a long way from Pärt's idea of the "proceeding from the incorporeal to the corporeal", the incarnate conception of religious mysticism.

Music-spirituality-postmodernism

In exploring the transcendence of the spiritual in the compositional approaches of Pärt and the soon to be discussed Marić, a more nuanced understanding of the triangle *music – spirituality – postmodernism* (Cobussen, 2008, p. 36) is essential, as is an understanding of connections across contemporary art forms that goes beyond previous thinking about exclusivity and clear borders. Marcel Cobussen (2008) offers useful insights on spirituality versus modernity in his critique of the *Nieuwe spirituele muziek (New Spiritual Music)* festival, held in Amsterdam in 1999 and continued in June 2007, with a program including works by Pärt and Tavener (p. 29). Cobussen's starting point is the festival's descriptive program notes, which describe "the last big movement in the development of the music history of the 20th century that simultaneously marks the transition towards the 21st century" (p. 29). The festival organizers speak decisively of a movement, a post-modern movement, associated with a vast group of preeminent voices within academic circles, who all have in common the aspiration to define a new movement as separated from earlier schools and styles. He illustrates the broader, negative understanding of modernism and the modern Western society of our time, a society where culture appears to have become an industry and the world is disenchanted (p. 30). It is, seemingly, the return of the sacred and the new simplicity within musical forms that will mark a transition towards a new, positive, postmodern development of music in the 21st century.

As Cobussen (2008) describes, spirituality and postmodernism seem to act on the same plane, against and beyond modernism, where *New Spirituality* is presented as a movement within the broader concept of postmodern music and spirituality inherits the qualities of postmodernism:

> In almost all respects, the musical principles of the "New Spiritual Music" seem to be diametrically opposed to those of modernism: repetition and rest versus

> development and progress, tradition and recognizability versus innovation and experiment, communication versus individualism and conceptualism, tonality versus atonality, intuitive simplicity versus academic complexity, spiritual narrations versus rational abstractions. (p. 30)

However, postmodernism becomes problematic for its perceived rejection of the esthetics of "classical modernism" – serialism, atonality, innovation, experiment, rationality, to mention a few – only to supplant this with "new simplist" terms such as tonality, repetition, tradition, and familiarity (pp. 30–31). Cobussen (2008) refers to the philosophy of Wolfgang Welsh's *Unsere Postmoderne Moderne* (1987) and Jean-Francois Lyotard's *The Postmodern Explained* (1997), who both situate the postmodern within the project of modernity (p. 34). He also refers to Michel Foucault's interpretation of modernity in *The Order of Things* (1971), who alongside Lyotard considers modernity and postmodernity as a way of thinking and feeling, and as a way of acting and behaving (p. 34).

The theories of the postmodern as a prolongation of modernism form an essential approach to understanding contemporary music and spirituality. As already discussed, contemporary composers who are commonly associated with the term spirituality write music which is often placed under the aegis of a movement variously defined as *new simplicity, spiritual minimalism,* or *sacred/holy minimalism*. These terms, commonly accepted today, paint exactly the picture Cobussen discourages and show an understanding of music determined by fixed, sometimes politically and not esthetically motivated terms, limiting a genuine approach to understanding the experience of spirituality through music. With this in mind, we can reconsider spirituality through contemporary music on its own terms.

The Octoechos and the space between the Church and the concert hall

Ivan Moody (2014) argues that paraliturgical music is the "real arena" where spirituality and modernism intersect and speaks of a "space" between the Church and the concert hall, where paraliturgical music

has a place (p. 10). The term paraliturgical music can be defined as music based on sacred texts and with religious content, intended for the concert hall rather than liturgic purposes. From the position of both a priest and a composer, in an interview with Maria Stroganova (2014), Moody declares that he writes for this "space", but never with the intention of converting people. By engaging with religious content and spiritual concerns through music, a new space for experiencing spirituality can emerge independent of explicitly religious contexts of worship. This space is shaped but not conditioned by traditional frames of a religious domain and offers a virtual time and environment accessible to the receptive listener regardless of religious belief and commitment.

This unique space that Moody speaks of is, in the case of Pärt and Marić, recurrently constructed using structural and spiritual elements from the Octoechos, the ancient system of eight church tones which forms an essential part of worship in the Christian Orthodox liturgy. A brief examination of the Octoechos provides a useful backdrop for the discussion of Ljubica Marić's work that follows – her work was profoundly influenced by the chant of the Serbian Orthodox Church. The Octoechos is both a musical system and a liturgical concept, where the hymns are organized according to the system of eight church tones, so that each week, only one tone is used (Ribić, 2014, p. 24). The hymns are sung in cycles over the course of a church year – a full cycle of eight tones begins on the first Sunday after the Pentecost and continues until Lazarus Saturday (Ribić, 2014, p. 24). This practice, due to its complicated neume notation, was handed down mostly through oral tradition until the second half of the nineteenth century.

In the Serbian Orthodox chant tradition, which was essential to Marić's creativity, more recent church chant was written down using modern notation. Stevan Stojanović Mokranjac, a distinguished composer who began transcribing Serbian church chant in 1897, transcribed a notable collection of chant whilst teaching at the Saint Sava Seminary in Belgrade, published in 1908, which would consequently meet the day-to-day needs of teachers and students. In his transcription of eight-tone chant, according to Romana Ribić (2014, p. 24), Mokranjac (1908) was

guided by the principle of instructiveness, creating a fusion of folklore church anthology and chant textbook. Mokranjac transcribed the melodies according to performances by other cantors and, as a creative musician, he eliminated all superfluous ornamentation, keeping only what he deemed necessary (Ribić, 2014, p. 24). Mokranjac also wrote liturgical works based on Serbian chant, which allowed him detailed knowledge of the tonal system and led to a trajectory of compositional confidence and originality (Moody, 2014, p. 73) – one that Ljubica Marić built upon.

The archaic and the modern in the approach of Ljubica Marić

To more closely comprehend Marić's engagement with this material, it is necessary to note that her works were written in former Yugoslavia, in a time where the arts were influenced by the complex inter-cultural politics of the country (Moody, 2014, p. 69). Modernism as a phenomenon in former Yugoslavia developed independently from the (until recently widely accepted) linear normative understanding of the West (Moody, 2014, p. 69) and as a reaction to the broader socio-political context, which formed a different set of circumstances and led to multiple streams within a short timeframe. The expression of "a deep nostalgia for a vanished medieval past" (Moody, 2014, p. 71) was evident in the First Yugoslav Artistic Exhibit that took place in Belgrade in 1904 and established the ethos of the beginning of the century. Yet critical voices reacted against the intense devotion to the national spirit and "hoped that the arts in Serbia would take their due place in the context of the arts in the world in general" (Popović, 1901, pp. 27–36).

The interest in Orthodox chant and liturgical works flourished with the composers of the era and, most distinctively, within the works of Mokranjac. It was continued by a number of composers in the following decades, however, all the while within liturgical frames and purposes, following the tradition of writing genuinely liturgical music and keeping the category separate from concert music. The idea of an intersection between the spirituality of Orthodox chant and modernist expressions

written for concert purposes saw its potential in the work of Ljubica Marić, who followed Mokranjac's lead and established a whole new relevance for employing spiritual concerns in the creation of a personal musical esthetic.

Musicologists consider Marić a pioneering modernist composer and point out how she found "an inexhaustible source of inspiration in Serbian folk and church music heritage" (Milin, 2009, p. 12). Borislav Čičovački (2009) states that she "synthesized medieval music with the avant-garde experience of 20th century music in her work" and suggests how "her music announced the beginning of postmodernism and minimalism" (pp. 4–5), regarding Marić as the possible precursor of Pärt and Tavener – a striking statement given the narratives commonly described, as discussed earlier in the chapter. Of even more relevance in this discussion is how we might interpret Marić's own words, which indicate a modernist approach, also apparent through her brief exploration of serialism, atonality, dodecaphony and quarter-tone music during studies in Prague and, more notably, her encounters with the esthetics of Béla Bartók, Dmitri Shostakovich and Igor Stravinsky.

> We always turn to that which we feel to have arisen in the past through a particular creative force, that which is able to live on and extend through time as an uninterrupted, eternal now. Thus viewed, the present and the past are not opposites – the mutuality strengthen one another, developing together and growing into something new. (Čičovački, 1996)

An important aspect of Marić's artistic expression is that her reworking of the archaic does not derive from a specific spiritual tradition; rather, it derives from a specific musical tradition, that of Serbian chant, which is, "analytically speaking, and quite apart from its musical characteristics, also the music of a spiritual tradition" (Moody, 2014, p. 88). The idea of a musical/spiritual tradition here can be understood as a cultural phenomenon and seen in the light of Balkan historiography, deriving from the culturally embodied idea of hundreds of years of resistance to the Islamic (Ottoman) imposition on the autochthonous Christian medieval societies of the Balkans in all aspects of life. This was a time during which maintaining spiritual, religious heritage was essential for the moral survival of

a nation. Very well aware of the Orthodox heritage, Marić did not, however, tend to the viewpoints of the Orthodox Church in which the artist is seen as a channel for reception and transmission of the divine, leaving no room for the individual self, and instead employed a modernist language as a tool for the transmission of an inner spiritual experience.

Marić's cantata *Songs of Space* (1956), known as one of her greatest vocal-instrumental achievements, with a text based on funerary inscriptions found on monumental medieval tombstones, shows a close personal relationship with dynamic spirituality. This relationship resulted soon in the creation of a moving, idiosyncratic language, recognizable for its intermittent static, modal harmonic fields woven together with the elements of Orthodox chant – an approach in affinity with ideas found in Pärt's mature style. Following his assessment of Marić's work "Songs of Space" (1956), Shostakovich (Beščević, 1963) noted that: "Ljubica Marić makes use of the entire arsenal of contemporary music in order to attain a high goal. She speaks from her innermost soul, in a clear and impressive language" (p. 38).

Marić's employment of elements from the Octoechos is extensively described in a biography written by Melita Milin (2018), where the cyclical work *Musica Octoicha* (1958–1963) is analyzed and contextualized, showing how all compositions of the cycle are linked by the common root of the musical theme, and marked by the distinctly individual attitude of the composer towards her source within the selected modes of the Octoechos (p. 154). In a comprehensive analysis of Marić's works, Milin points out how the composer takes particular care of the melodic qualities of the chant and transforms them into instrumental music, in a way that allows them to keep their distinct melodic character. She identifies two characteristics that can be noticed in the way Marić incorporates melodies from the Octeochos, notated by Mokranjac (1908) in his *Serbian Folk Church Chant: The Octoechos,* and transforms them into the themes of her piece *Musica Octoicha*.

According to Milin (2018, pp. 154–156), firstly, Marić faithfully adheres to the original musical setting of the "Octoechos", taking whole phrases or fragments from it. Her creativity lies in her way of connecting the selected parts, which results in new musical wholes with the attributes

of theme-like functionality. The second notable quality finds its place in the rhythmic transformation of the melodies belonging to the different modes of the Octoechos. Marić achieves a new melodic movement and a different articulation from the one established in the musical notation. Thus, the melodies often acquire a choral character in rhythmically-even expositions or subtle variety, suggesting a sense of rubato within the vocal expression they derive from. Milin (2018) writes that:

> With her compositional treatment of the melodies from the Octoechos, Marić broke the direct ties with church texts and context in general. Yet, although absent, these texts seem to retain their mysterious, hidden presence. While not adhering to any pattern, Marić shapes each composition of the cycle in her own, individual way, and what connects them is the inspired evocation of the depths of the past seen from the perspective of the presence. (p. 156)

Similarly to Pärt, Marić's musical expression appears to be motivated by a personal experience of spirituality rooted in Orthodox Christianity, while the spirituality experienced through her music goes beyond religious purposes and practices. It is a spirituality rooted in religion that does not require interpretation within religious terms, a spirituality that (post) modern listeners can access and experience through music itself and through a synergy of the personal experience of the composer and their own experiences, irrespective of belief and ideology.

Spirituality as an open space

Despite individual approaches, Marić and Pärt share a mystical character grounded in personal spiritual experience and, to some degree, familiar compositional approaches. They have composed music rooted in Orthodox rituals with Byzantine chant at its core, which intersects with spirituality, modernism, and tradition. While Pärt is regarded as one of the most successful composers of today, Marić's music remains largely neglected and little known outside national frames, despite the wave of effort to affirm the importance of female composers and include previously omitted music from outside the Western canon into music history literature and curricula. Marić's role is certainly in need of further

investigation. The foregoing contextual analysis of how elements of modernism and religious traditions are drawn together intends to bring new insight to listeners outside of religious circles, while at the same time providing insight into the work of composers lesser known outside national and/or religious parameters.

I will conclude by revisiting the idea of a "space" between the Church and the concert hall, and reflect on how Marić and Pärt have created spiritual spaces through their own compositions, perhaps due to the lack of an actual physical space for religious worship or driven by its limitations. Both Marić and Pärt composed some of their best-known music under regimes in which public engagement with religion was not welcome. As Lubow (2010) notes, Pärt's *Credo,* with its religious text, was granted permission to be premiered only because the score was hidden from government censors on the night of its performance. Although never prohibited, overt engagement with religion was discouraged by the socialist regime during the times in which Marić wrote her most ground-breaking piece *Musica Octoicha,* based on the modes of the *Octoechos*. Both composers created imaginary spiritual spaces with their music, which appealed to listeners who identified with them. On the other hand, the disapproval of the performance of secular concert music within Orthodox churches might have inspired the creation of a place outside the realm of the liturgy, where tradition, spirituality and religious beliefs freely intersect with modern ideas and the needs of composers, performers, and listeners.

Despite its evident qualities, as Scholl and van Maas point out, a contemporary spiritual music forms a litmus test of music today and raises some questions about the state of Western art music (Scholl & Van Maas, 2016). They note that the anxieties imposed by "new spiritual music" can be seen in light of a general concern for the present state of composed or high-art (classical) music: "…what lies beneath this is a fundamental concern for the ways in which (classical) music and art embody values and experiences that authenticate and to some extent justify our collective experience" (pp. 6–7).

The approach to understanding the connections between contemporary music and spirituality through the music of Marić and Pärt presented

in this chapter suggests a way of addressing the limitations in some modern conceptions of spirituality. While exploring how the spiritual spaces sensed through their music can affect those listening regardless of religious belief, it also suggests how the symbiosis of the two phenomena can mitigate the apprehension of detachment sometimes felt in modern living and enrich our collective experiences. Through the compositional approaches of Pärt and Marić, as well as the listening experience, we can rethink spirituality through music, and music through spirituality. Our perception of spirituality can be broadened, both inside and outside the musical context, on this basis. Rather than a fixed term or an ideology, spirituality can be seen as an open space that gives opportunity for reflection and transformation, a space beyond conventions, situated between the earthly and the divine.

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