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## Musicology

The Key Concepts

*Second Edition*

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Many composers worked through the tensions of the Cold War and were subject to its ideological pressures. This was most notable in the Soviet Union, with leading composers such as Shostakovich subject to critical scrutiny (see Taruskin 1995b), but, in different, more covert ways, the arts, including music, were often subject to propagandist and ideological appropriations in the American sphere as well (see Caute 2003; Stonor Saunders 1999).

In the context of popular music, the general anti-war sentiment of some music in the mid- to later 1960s can be seen to be both shaped by and responding to the tensions of the Cold War. The most powerful reflection of this is Bob Dylan's 'A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall' (1962), which makes an oblique yet powerful statement about the reality of the nuclear threat. Such imagery is repeated during later stages of the Cold War, with the Young Marble Giants' track 'The Final Day' (1980) being a notable example. The intentionally post-punk simplicity of the music allows for the meaning of the lyrics to be clear and unambiguous, speaking of the 'final day', the moment of nuclear annihilation, and inflected by a class-based political perspective as defined by the evocative claim that it is the rich who die last (see **class**). This capturing of a Cold War apocalyptic vision was enhanced in the 1980s by screenings of the film *The War Game* by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), a realist documentary-style television drama made by the BBC in 1965 depicting a nuclear attack on Britain but not shown at the time for fear of provoking public alarm.

One of the first, and most insightful, examples of musicology engaging with issues around the Cold War is Martin Brody's article titled 'Music for the Masses': Milton Babbitt's Cold War Music Theory' (Brody 1993). In this article, Brody considers the American composer Milton Babbitt's music **theory** and its insistence on "scientific" language and "scientific" method (ibid., 163), not as formally autonomous (see **autonomy**) but as part of a wider, critically defined context and discourse. This context is shaped by consideration of biographical factors (see **biography**) around Babbitt's identification with the 'New York leftist intellectual scene of the 1930s and 1940s' (see **place**), a scene that was defined by the polemics between different ideological currents, and Babbitt's personal association with individuals within this scene ('Some of my best friends were Trotskyites' (ibid., 169)). This approach not only contextualizes Babbitt's theory but also highlights the political significance of **language** and discourse. Since the publication of Brody's article there has been the significant development of a musicological literature that engages with the ideological, political contexts of the Cold War. Important interventions in this debate include, among others, Amy

Beal's engaging account of American experimental music in post-1945 Germany (Beal 2006), Beckles Wilson's work on Hungarian music during the Cold War (Beckles Wilson 2007), and Anne Schreffler's detailed account of the serialism of Stravinsky's late work *Threni* in the context of the Congress for Cultural Freedom, which is described as 'an American-backed, CIA-funded organization set up as part of the ambitious program to rebuild European cultural life after the war' (Shreffler 2005, 225) and which sought to counteract Soviet influence and propaganda.

*See also: modernism, nationalism, postmodernism*

*Further reading:* Adlington 2013b; Carroll 2003; Fosler-Lussier 2007; Gienow-Hecht 2010; Kutschke and Norton 2013; Schmelz 2009; Walsh 2004, 2008

## CONFLICT (MUSIC AND CONFLICT)

An increasing number of studies have sought to chart the role of music 'in both inciting and resolving a spectrum of social and political conflicts in the contemporary world' (O'Connell and Castelo-Branco 2010, back cover). As Arild Berg has pointed out, there exists a commonly held yet entirely unscientific conviction that music has some kind of magical power over people that might be used to resolve conflict situations (Berg 2011). Set alongside this somewhat romantic view (see **Romanticism**), however, is the more sobering reality that music has been used widely as a tool to instigate, continue or reignite conflict and otherwise mediate violence (see Johnson and Cloonan 2009). The presence of music on the battlefield has a long history, from at least as far back as Ancient Greek and Roman conflicts through to the Iraq and Afghanistan wars in the 1990s and early twenty-first century. In the latter, heavy metal (especially Metallica), hardcore and rap music were used to motivate and induce states of euphoria among American combatants (see Gittoes 2005; Goodman 2009), and even to torture prisoners (Cusick 2006, 2008a, 2008b; Johnson and Cloonan 2009), a use that exploits music's susceptibility to being appropriated for purposes far beyond its origins. The role of the media is also important here, both through its ability to circulate music that incites hatred and as a potential form of resistance, as with the B92 radio station in Belgrade (see Collin 2004). In purely musical terms (see **formalism**), the role of conflict in tonal music should also be noted, primarily between competing tonal key centres, and the consequent desire for resolution. Following Beethoven, such conflict is often dramatized musically, an idea that culminates in the at times highly turbulent symphonies of Bruckner, Mahler and Nielsen.