

**Between Stockhausen/Zimmermann and Eisler/Dessau:
The Italian Composer Luca Lombardi in the Two Germanies**

[with a list of selected works and writings]

Cold War Divisions

The Iron Curtain was not as ironclad as captured by Churchill’s colorful and certainly appropriate verdict, and the Berlin Wall—erected more than fifty years ago as the most visible and ominous piece of architecture of the Cold War—was not as impenetrable, as minefields, watch towers, self-shooting mechanisms, and the orders to kill trespassers implied. But the traffic was largely one-sided—from West to East. Visits to the “other” side largely depended on what kind of passport one happened to have.

Living in Berlin (West) during the 1960s, I frequently crossed the checkpoint at the S-Bahnhof Friedrichstraße, exchanged the obligatory amount of D-Mark-West for D-Mark-Ost at the obligatory rate of 1:1, paid an additional administrative fee, waited in line (sometimes for an hour or more), until I was admitted to stand before a more or less unfriendly border guard to answer questions about the nature of my visit and, most importantly, whether I carried any printed matter—“brinted madder” in Saxonian dialect. Newspapers and books deemed unworthy of entry were submitted to a shredder. When I finally had passed all the hurdles to enter the capital of the DDR, I was indeed in a different country. It smelled differently: the disinfectant used there and brown-coal--burning stoves imbued the DDR with a distinct odor. The newspapers had entirely different headlines than those in the Western half of the city. And the houses, especially outside of the well-kept center, were in desperate need of a paint job.

Besides visiting friends on the other side of the wall, there were additional reasons to cross into the Eastern half of the city: East Berlin was a showcase for international visitors. To some extent, its cultural life was superb: the Komische Oper with Walter Felsenstein as director; the Staatsoper Unter den Linden; the Distel (Thistle), a political-literary cabaret enjoying a kind of court-jester's freedom in being critical of a rather stern and calcified regime; and, of course, the Berliner Ensemble with its Brechtian aura and authority preserved by Helene Weigel, Brecht's widow, as director and actress.

In addition to these "tourist attractions," there were other exchanges, perhaps less visible but equally substantial. Twenty years ago, James Hepokoski described in exemplary detail in "The Dahlhaus Project" how the West Berlin musicologist's *Grundlagen der Musikgeschichte* (trans. *The Foundations of Music History*) and *Musikgeschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts* (1980, trans. *Music in the Nineteenth Century*, California Press) may be understood as responses to the rise of the student movement and the emergence of a New Left that swept West Germany and West Berlin in the second half of the 1960s and that manifested itself not only in street demonstrations but also, and on a more intellectual level, in academia. In fact, Dahlhaus's writings were part of a dialogue going on across the Berlin Wall (and both Hepokoski and, more explicitly, Anne Shreffler have addressed this issue) with Georg Knepler, an Austrian musicologist with a considerable following also in the West, who lived in the same city (albeit in its Eastern part) and who preceded Dahlhaus with the publication of a *Musikgeschichte des Neunzehnten Jahrhunderts* in 1961. In 1977 both scholars went public with their respective positions on how to write music history: Dahlhaus with his *Grundlagen* and

Knepler with *Geschichte als Weg zum Musikverständnis* (History as a Path to Understanding Music, 2/1982). Even though these two musicologists respected each other, their differences were acute; put in a nutshell: one scholar insisted on the autonomy of the work of art, the other on its socio-economic determinants.

And there was a composer who, a decade after his death in East Berlin, became an icon of the student movement and the musically inclined New Left: Hanns Eisler who quite early in his career decided to be guided by a “socialist” perspective of art’s function and compose music that would appeal to audiences. The case is a little more complicated, I know, but the students of 1968—including the protagonist whose struggles are at the center of this study—appropriated Eisler, as it were, as an icon of artistic relevance, and soon academic teachers in the West responded: with Dahlhaus taking a rather dim view and Reinhold Brinkmann devoting an entire seminar in Berlin (West) to Eisler, arriving, by dint of methodological circumspection and even a trace of sympathy, at similar results.

The lines were drawn: In the East, socialist realism and responsibility to (and responsiveness toward) audiences; in the West: avant-garde, striving for novelty under the banner of artistic freedom (but leaving, all too often, audiences behind). Schoenberg vs. Eisler, Dahlhaus vs. Knepler: the political divisions of Cold War era Germany seemed to be reflected also in music and musicology. And since revolutions in Germany, as the verdict goes, take place in music, the Manichean condemnations on both sides often reached fever-pitch with only a few individuals being able to negotiate the divide.

A wanderer between different worlds

One of them is Luca Lombardi, a composer born in Rome in 1945, at home in Italy, Germany (and when there were two Germanies, at home in both) and later in Japan and Israel. He now resides in Marino (south of Rome) and Tel Aviv.

Lombardi is a wanderer between different worlds and cultures in more than one meaning of the term. Superficially, this is already evident from a list of his compositions, which sometimes have German and sometimes have Italian titles, as well as from his writings, which, depending for what purpose they were written, were penned down in Italian or German. (See Appendices A and B.) Lombardi attended the German Gymnasium in Rome; his parents, both of them academics, insisted that their son be exposed as a high-school student to another cultural orbit and thus prepared their offspring for a multicultural artistic career. On the one hand, he is heir to the classicistic traditions of his homeland, but what makes his works so interesting is that they are deeply pervaded, as the composer Wolfgang Rihm has formulated it, “by expressive ideals and philosophical aspects of German culture.” Lombardi is comparable in that respect to Busoni, who positioned himself more than one hundred years ago in a similar way: a seeker equipped with sensors that enabled him to be a mediator between Italian and German culture.

Dual and multiple polarities, an attitude characterized by the locutions “not only-but also” and “as well as”—indeed, placing himself “between chairs,” to use a German expression—is evident in Lombardi’s career also in another area. In 1968, a decisive year in the annals of the European student movement, Lombardi drafted an essay that already hints at the conflicts and struggles the composer would face in the 1970s and 1980s (see Appendix C, no.1): “The task of the composer today is to earn a new contact with audiences.” He sketches how music of the twentieth century, propelled by the idea of progress and innovation, was mostly addressed to an elite. In order to have a broader appeal, Lombardi insists, it would be necessary to give up the formalistic musical avant-garde as an end in itself, and he asks the composer “to leave the ivory tower, to go to the people, and to make a contribution for improving society.” This high-minded statement is somewhat formulaic and perhaps not entirely thought-through. Still, the essay fragment shows, that Lombardi, already at age 22, was pondering issues and exhibited, albeit in a text not published at the time, the coordinates and the fighting spirit that were to determine his later career.

Conflicting Lures

But first of all, Lombardi journeyed, perhaps not entirely consistently, to Cologne—at that time, the Mecca of the musical avant-garde, whose sounds he had absorbed in late-night concerts broadcast by RAI 3 (the “third program”—i.e., third radio channel—which, at the time, was reserved by major European radio stations, such as the BBC, for listeners at the fringes). Or was it perhaps consistent—nevertheless? Because for someone setting out and going into the world to become a composer in 1968, there was really no way around the avant-garde, if he did

not want to be immediately sidelined. By coincidence (or a fortunate turn of events), he studied simultaneously with both Karlheinz Stockhausen and Bernd-Alois Zimmermann—another proof of Lombardi’s situating himself between chairs, since the two Cologne composers did not like each other at all. “Another German composer” (and it was not meant as a compliment) was Stockhausen’s verdict about his older colleague, who, a few years earlier, had made his mark with the sensational premiere of his opera *Die Soldaten* (The Soldiers). Lombardi also attended composition courses with Mauricio Kagel, Vinko Globokar, Henri Pousseur, and Dieter Schnebel. Lombardi never quite advanced to the inner circle of Stockhausen acolytes (such as Alfred Alings, Rolf Gehlhaar, Johannes Fritsch, Harald Bojé, and Aloys Kontarsky), who, in the mid-1960s, provided their master with an array of improvised sounds he could use in meditative and intuitive compositions such as *Aus den sieben Tagen* (From the Seven Days). Nonetheless, under the influence of studying with Stockhausen, Lombardi wrote pieces that fall into the category of controlled chance music such as *Diagonal* for two transistor radios and *Das ist kein Bach, sagte Beethoven, das ist ein Meer* (That is no Brook [in German: Bach], said Beethoven, that is an Ocean) for 7 performers (both 1968). The latter takes its point of departure from the E-flat minor Prelude of Bach’s *Das Wohltemperierte Klavier* I. It also exists in a version for five performers, arranged 35 years later. Lombardi still considers it a “valid” essay in establishing a connection between improvisation and compositional responsibility.

Lombardi’s *Proporzioni* for 4 trombones (written in 1968/69 for Zimmermann) owes something to a method, used by both Stockhausen and Zimmermann, to develop temporal

proportions out of interval proportions; Globokar, the avant-garde's trombonist par excellence, conducted the premiere, even though the piece did not abound in special effects for his instrument, for which he was famous. Zimmermann's influence on Lombardi is less manifest in specific compositions (a course on film, especially of the experimental and underground kind, exploring the medium as a temporal art, seems to have made a memorable impression), but his poly-stylistic approach to composition that jibed with some of Lombardi's works as well as his more humane and modest comportment (in contrast to the authoritarian and self-centered Stockhausen) established bonds that certainly were more lasting. Many years after Zimmermann's death by suicide in 1970, Lombardi would honor his former teacher with an essay of reminiscences that draws a wonderful portrait of the composer as a musician and a human being in his last year, and also of Lombardi's studies in Cologne. The encounter with the musical avant-garde was very important for the budding composer; it meant inspiration and technical know-how as well as contacts and connections that provided orientation and support and thus carried him for years. Some of his compositions and writings of the 1970s and 1980s can indeed be considered belonging to the avant-garde, although his was a sometimes critical voice.

But the encounter was also a collision, whose impact soon led to a crisis. Hadn't Lombardi already warned in 1968 of a blind material fetishism, as Adorno had done a decade earlier in "Modern Music is Growing Old"? And hadn't Lombardi demanded, even though in an unpublished essay fragment, to address a broader audience and get active politically through music? That was bound not to go well, and it didn't.

It is a wonderful story, which has been frequently told as part of the foundation myth of Lombardi's career as a composer, and perhaps it took place in 1970 exactly as told: In the midst of the antiseptically sterile atmosphere of the Utrecht Studio for Electronic Music in the Netherlands, Lombardi was aided in a crisis (and he has encountered crises often) by a friend who gave him a little Reclam volume (not published by the West German branch of the publisher in Stuttgart, but by the original house—at that time a state-owned company or VEB [Volkseigener Betrieb] in Leipzig): Hanns Eisler, *Reden und Aufsätze* (Speeches and Essays). Eisler, son of a philosophy professor like Lombardi, had broken in the 1920s with his teacher Schoenberg by refusing to follow him on the path into the twelve-tone future and henceforth had pursued a politically-engaged direction of composing, also in collaboration with Bertolt Brecht. His most famous composition is the “Solidaritätslied” (Song of Solidarity) from the movie *Kuhle Wampe*, a Kampflied (song of struggle) for the working class, more appropriately performed on the street than in the concert hall. In the following years, Eisler became posthumously a lighthouse for the young Italian-born composer, which provided orientation and artistic security between the Scylla of a self-centered avant-garde and the Charybdis of blind and blinded political activism, as Lombardi ventured out into the open sea.

The 1970s

This also was doomed not to go well, but at first it did. Lombardi conducted a choir of the Metal Workers Union in Cologne, bound to petit bourgeois ideals rather than the principles of class struggle—not quite as the political-activist-turned-choir-director had hoped for. He occasionally composed—“with bad conscience,” as he put it, “because I just wanted to

compose”—pieces such as *Wiederkehr* (Return, 1971), one of the great piano works of the second half of the twentieth century, which, unrelated to political activities, tries to establish a new foundation for the harmonic or vertical dimension in music. Sometimes he set to music poems by authors with an undisputed socialist or communist pedigree: Ho-Chi Minh’s “Prison Diary,” for instance, and verses by the Chilean Communist poet Pablo Neruda; sometimes he wrote what in German is called “songs” (different from what in English is known as “Lieder”): unpretentious tunes, with piano accompaniment, delivering texts of a political nature, mostly espousing the virtues of class warfare. And sometimes—his striving for political relevance was open also to this possibility—he did not compose at all, but produced a radio play, entirely without music, addressing the problems of immigrant workers in West Germany.

In the 1970s, Lombardi was determined to use his creativity to contribute to changing the political landscape, to improving society, or—if this was too much—at least to make changes locally, or—if even this was too tall an order—to bear witness as an artist to the ailments of the status quo. There is the *Prima sinfonia*, Lombardi’s first essay in the symphonic genre (1974-75, premiered in Leipzig in 1979), which comes across as somewhat poster-like (and thus “symphonic”) but which definitely is not agitprop; it is dedicated to the Chilean people in their struggle after the CIA-inspired coup d’état in 1973, manifesto of a completely different time, now long past, to which Lombardi wanted to do justice by combining the sounds of new music with folk elements and musical quotations of a political nature (such as the songs “El pueblo unido” and “Venceremos” by Sergio Ortega). There are the *Variazioni su “Avanti popolo alla riscossa”* (1977, dedicated to and premiered by Frederic Rzewski); it is based on an

Italian workers' song "Bandiera rossa" (Red Flag)—a song that was "in the air," as it were, in the 1970s. (Armando Gentilucci used it in the epilogue of his wind quintet *Cile* of 1973, and Rzewski himself quotes it in his monumental piano variations "El pueblo unido" of 1975.) While Lombardi's *Variazioni* can be explained by resorting to purely musical features of the composition, the choice of "Bandiera rossa" as the foundation of the piece as well as the well-calculated succession of variations (arranged with the goal of achieving greater clarity and determination at the end—an extra-musical program, so to speak) imbue the work with a political message: *Avanti popolo alla riscossa!* ("Forward, people, to the rescue"). And there are the *Tui-Gesänge* (also of 1977, and premiered the following year in Paris), settings of faux-Brechtian texts by Albrecht Betz imbued with a scathing critique of bourgeois complacency and insistence on the status quo. (Here is a sample from the opening movement: "The world is a big cattle stall / It cannot be cleaned as easily / As the Augean stable / Because while it is being swept / The oxen remain inside / And constantly add new dirt.") Most Eislerian perhaps is our protagonist's participation in a collaborative composition, the scenic cantata *Streik bei Mannesmann* (1973), supervised by Hans Werner Henze, to which Lombardi contributed the Overture and the "Gewerkschaftslied" (Song of the Union). The work was premiered with much fanfare at the Theater am Schiffbauerdamm in East Berlin (with Ruth Berghaus, the wife of Paul Dessau, as stage director)—perhaps an instance where artists were appropriated by a political propaganda machine.

A tangible result of Lombardi's enthusiasm for Eisler is a dissertation, submitted in 1975 at the University of Rome, as well as several books and essays about Eisler published in the

1970s. In preparation for his Eisler studies, Lombardi lived for half a year in East Berlin (an additional month was spent in the Western part of the city, waiting for his DDR visa), where the Euro-Communist was to get to know not only socialist reality but where he also became master student of Paul Dessau, who, like Eisler, was a major Brecht collaborator and, by that time, perhaps the most prominent figure on the musical scene of the DDR. Lombardi learned from Eisler (or rather: he saw his own views confirmed in Eisler's poetics)—and Lombardi has chiseled this conviction repeatedly into both his Italian and German writings—that the value of a piece of music is not determined by the choice of material or a certain technique, but whether these materials and techniques are used purposefully, i.e., used according to the content and function of the piece. It is an insight that nowadays we consider almost self-evident. But in the 1970s such convictions brought Lombardi into conflict with an avant-garde that propagated the serial technique as the only way of composing historically relevant music.

Lombardi's inclination to position himself between chairs did follow him across the Iron Curtain. The master classes with Dessau took place every other week in the afternoon at the master's residence at a lake in the Berlin suburbs and usually began (Kaffee und Kuchen were served, occasionally Ruth Berghaus was present) with conversations about art and music in general, not only about mutual friends such as Nono and Henze, but also about Mozart and Picasso, and the young Lombardi soon picked up that Dessau and Eisler had been competitors as DDR composers and that the jealousies continued years after the death of Eisler in 1962. Disregarding the substantial works in Eisler's oeuvre such as the *Deutsche Symphonie* or *14 Arten den Regen zu beschreiben*, Dessau saw his colleague mostly as a composer of music giving

voice to proletarian class struggle. “Eisler invented the song of the street, didn’t he?” Lombardi heard from Dessau, feigning praise, “take, for example, a song like ‘Lob des Kommunismus’ [In Praise of Communism, a song written for Brecht’s play *Die Mutter*].” The underlying tension must have been felt acutely by Lombardi, who at the time engaged in research leading to a dissertation on Eisler and was working on a composition *Non requiescat: Musica in memoria di Hanns Eisler*, a piece whose genesis was supervised, ironically, in a master class with Eisler’s archrival Dessau.

It seems clear that Lombardi did not just talk about “dialectics”—a term very much overused (and thus abused) by the Left. Rather, he seems to have “lived” according to dialectic principles. In the 1970s, he moved back and forth between different musical spheres and occasionally succeeded in bridging or integrating them. On the one hand, he remained faithful to the musical avant-garde, even in a piece such as *Non Requiescat* (composed in memory of his “lighthouse” Hanns Eisler), but more and more the political activist found his voice through musical and literary epigraphs with clear connotations to the proletariat, through incorporation of folk materials, through literary mottos and dedications, and—last but not least—through the texts set in his compositions.

Lombardi’s writings likewise reflect the bipolarity of his world, in which musical and revolutionary truths occasionally complement each other and occasionally compete and conflict with each other. In other words: They relate to each other in a kind of creative tension such as many artists need in order to remain creative. Sometimes, however, the conflicting “truths”—and this ought to be pointed out as well—stood in each other’s ways.

Lombardi's writings from the time when he looked at the world with ideological glasses are carefully worked out; their trains of thought are full of nuances, and one is surprised by the open-mindedness and tolerance with which he copes with opposing standpoints, especially how he warns of dogmatic rigidity and expecting magic solutions too quickly. The left-wing jargon of the times, of course, shines through in many a passage, but Lombardi the democrat and humanist never submitted himself to produce socialist propaganda banners. In an essay entitled "Überlegungen zum Thema Musik und Politik" (Reflections on Music and Politics) written for a volume of essays with the title *Musik im Übergang* (Music in Transition), one can read: "Marxists in particular know that they do not own the truth, but only a method to analyze reality (and to change it)." That may be considered almost subversive when one considers that the volume was distributed simultaneously (and that was a rare event) in both West and East Germany. (Its Munich publishing house had the reputation of being close to the regime in East Berlin.) In order to get through censorship, a quotation of Chairman Mao, who, at that time, was a persona non grata in the Soviet orbit, was, in a different instance, surreptitiously attributed to the great leader Lenin and subsequently got printed without causing any complications. Here we may well see craftiness applied to attain rational goals: what Hegel called the "List der Vernunft."

Constructing a New Freedom

In his writings Lombardi seems to resist being appropriated by his supporters (and thereby being simplified and curtailed in his striving). Supporters who only saw in him the composer of politically engaged music and closed their eyes and ears to the variety and

richness of his creativity. In a pre-concert talk at the Wittener Tage für Neue Kammermusik in 1981 he spoke of a new freedom for composers (see Appendix C, no.2), and from the context it is clear that he means not only that a composer is free to use any kind of musical material and any techniques—a point definitely addressed to a musical avant-garde preoccupied only with its own preferred ways of working—but also—and here he gently distances himself from his left-wing supporters—that a composer can approach topics that not immediately come across as political. “If the overall approach is political in its best and widest meaning—that is, open toward the world and toward human beings—then there is no subject, no matter how private and art-specific, which should be taboo. Especially—and this is an aspect of the new freedom as well—we should not be afraid to strive for a correctly understood and contradictory beauty in music.”

These are new words: contradictory beauty, freedom from constraints, self-imposed as well as those enforced by groups. A new phase of life and creativity seems to express itself here. Indeed, the 1980s was to become a highly productive period for Lombardi: there is no other decade, in which he composed and wrote as much as then. The decade however was also a time of crisis for Lombardi the composer and intellectual. The generation of 1968 came of age. As a frequent visitor on the other side of the Iron Curtain, Lombardi had experienced the realities, distortions and compromises of socialism as practiced in the DDR, and slowly the Marxist perspective lost its attractiveness for him as a panacea to heal the problems and sufferings of the world. Quite early in his career, he had criticized the self-centeredness of the musical avant-garde, but now his political convictions needed to go through a critical

reassessment as well. In several essays (which could be considered manifestos of postmodernism)—“Construction of Freedom,” “Between Prehistory and Postmodernism,” and “From the Ivory Tower to the Tower of Babel,”—Lombardi formulated his positions on issues of contemporary music, distanced himself from orthodoxy and sectarianism of any kind, and postulated instead a pluralistic mode of composition—an approach that would be commensurate with the richness and diversity of a multicultural world and, hence, would enable music to communicate with larger audiences. He even insisted on a restoration of tonality (a stand that promptly resulted in animosity from many of his colleagues). Settling accounts with the musical avant-garde in the 1980s—his reassessment cannot be interpreted differently—had also a political dimension. The rigid blocs of the Cold War were undermined, initially, in music.

During those years Lombardi found new coordinates for his creativity in two figures: one from mythology, the other from legend. One is Sisyphus, who, in Albert Camus’s interpretation, accepts the absurdity of his fate with pride and without lamenting: namely to roll a rock up a mountain over and over again; the other is a legendary (and very German) character, namely Faust, who, in the “*verfremdet*” interpretation of Goethe’s drama provided by Italian poet Edoardo Sanguineti, is an intellectual, disappointed by the ideologies that guided him in his past accomplishments. Both characters became subjects of numerous compositions by Lombardi during the 1980s. There are no fewer than four works on Sisyphus, one of them, appropriately, called *Sisife felice*, referring to the happiness the protagonist experiences in accepting his fate. The most important of the works inspired by characters with whom the composer “identified”

on a personal level was, no doubt, his first opera, *Faust: Un travestimento*. Lombardi successfully proved here the viability of his pluralistic, i.e., multi-stylistic approach in a composition for the musical theatre. The opera was premiered in 1991 in Basel. In the same year, Lombardi, living in the Wendland, an area close to the border between former East and West Germany (the name, ironically, also means region of change or, less flatteringly, region of turn-coats), spoke of “ideological glasses and ideological walls” that once had determined his work and how, in a long and contradictory process, he said farewell to a teleological-messianic-idealistic conception of history: “The wall that has come down between East and West had been crumbling for a long time also in my head. ... I have thrown away my ideological glasses.” (See Appendix C, no.3.) The coordinates of the Cold War, musical and political, had lost their validity for Lombardi many years ago. His friends and acquaintances knew about it for some time; now, a year after the DDR had ceased to exist as a state, he made it public.

Looking back

How did negotiating the divide between East and West Germany shape Luca Lombardi, the composer and the intellectual? Only a preliminary answer can be attempted here, and I limit my comments by and large to East Germany. In practical terms—and they count for a lot—Lombardi encountered quite a number of musicians of the highest rank who would perform his pieces (e.g., Burkhard Glätzner and the Gruppe Neue Musik “Hanns Eisler”). His first two symphonies saw their premieres in Leipzig in 1979 and 1983, respectively, *Einklang* was premiered in East Berlin in 1981, as was, just a few months before the Wall came down, *Ein Lied*, a vocal composition for soprano and chamber ensemble on a text by Else Lasker-Schüler.

In West Germany Lombardi's works were mostly premiered during the "Wittener Tage für Neue Kammermusik," a festival closely associated with the WDR (West German Radio) in Cologne. There were commissions from both sides of the Iron Curtain: Lombardi's *Seconda sinfonia*, *Einklang*, the *Ophelia-Fragmente*, and the afore-mentioned *Ein Lied* were instigated by DDR institutions; and the West was similarly generous in recognizing the artistry of an Italian composer with commissions of various kinds. Lombardi was able to strike friendships that led to collaborative projects: e.g., with Heiner Müller, whose *Hamletmaschine* provided Lombardi with texts that inspired the composer to two extraordinarily dramatic musical readings in his *Ophelia-Fragmente* (1982), anticipating Lombardi's turn toward opera that would soon follow. Günter Mayer, a musicologist of considerable renown, and Friedrich Goldmann, a major voice among the DDR composers, became life-long friends; the latter conducted several of Lombardi's works, and, once allowed to travel, visited Lombardi for artistic and personal exchanges in Italy. (He even attended Lombardi's wedding in Rome in 2003.) After the DDR was gone, the network of friends and colleagues sustaining the artist remained intact: The first performance of the German version of *Faust: Un travestimento* was in Weimar in 1993; Lombardi's second opera, *Dmitri*, an opera with Shostakovich and Stalin as protagonists, about the power of music and the powerlessness of the composer, took place in Leipzig in 2000 (with Udo Zimmermann as director of the house commissioning the work)—just to name a few instances when connections made in Cold War times survived the political break. And in aesthetic terms? Lombardi, as we have seen, never subscribed completely to the prescriptions of the musical avant-garde, especially to its universal historical claim of being the only path to generating musical works of lasting value. He was a most reluctant avant-gardist. He

maintained an openness to different musical materials (shown in his poly-stylistic approach to composition, reminiscent of Zimmermann and Alfred Schnittke, as well as in his distinction, echoing Hans Werner Henze's outlook, between inclusive and exclusive music). This openness—paradoxically—may well have been nurtured in the politically closed East Germany to a greater extent than in the politically more open system of West Germany, where the musical avant-garde exerted near-totalitarian control over the direction of New Music.

The composer speaks

The composer should have the last word, and for that reason I would like to turn to a composition that, in a most radical way, exposes the aesthetic conflicts of an artist who wanted to have it both ways: musical avant-garde and music of political engagement: *Non requiescat: Musica in memoria di Hanns Eisler* of 1973 (“May he not find rest” is the title invoking the traditional Requiem). The six-minute piece is a musical essay in contradictions—and it is this on various levels, including notation which is sometimes more or less free (see Appendix D, no.1), sometimes rigorously precise (see Appendix D, no.2), and sometimes both at the same time. The most obvious and audible contradiction is the juxtaposition of the sounds of the musical avant-garde (including special instrumental effects) and the martial gestures of Eisler's *Solidaritätslied* in G minor, a quotation coming out of nowhere (so it seems) that strikes the listener familiar with the avant-garde as a shocking intrusion and the listener not familiar with the avant-garde as an oasis of welcome familiarity. Yes, there is a minimum of compositional preparation before the *Solidaritätslied* enters (see Appendix D, no.2) and, even after it has sounded, fragments of it seem to reverberate later on. Still, Lombardi, rather than downplaying

or camouflaging the gulf between Neue Musik as defined by Cologne and Darmstadt, and “Kampfmusik” as propagated by Eisler, decided to expose the contradiction. There is indeed a nearly complete break between the world represented by the *Solidaritatslied* and the context in which it is inserted.

In 1973, it was Lombardi’s hope that a new musical culture would overcome and reconcile the gulf he exposed in his work, a gulf characteristic of the Cold War with its particularly poignant musical constellations in a divided Germany.

Luca Lombardi, Selected Works, 1968-1990

1968

Das ist kein Bach, sagte Beethoven, das ist ein Meer! für 7 Instrumente. – RIC (137496). – UA L'Aquila 1968; Köln 1968; 20-30'

Diagonal für 2 Transistor-Radios. – RT (RTC 1704). – UA Florenz 1969; Spieldauer: unbestimmt

Rondel für Sopran, Celesta, Cembalo und Klavier (Text: Stéphane Mallarmé). – Ms. – UA Palermo 1968; 9'

1968/1969

Proporzioni für 4 Posaunen. – MOE (5155) – UA Köln 1969; 8'

Stufen (elektronische Musik). – Tonband (sowie Skizzen zum Stück) im Besitz des Komponisten; Tonband im Archiv der Kölner Hochschule für Musik. – UA Köln 1969

1970

Dal diario: 22 novembre 1970, gli emigrati italiani dimostrano a Lussemburgo für Sprechstimme und Klavier. – Ms. – Rom 1970

1971

Wiederkehr für Klavier. – MOE (5175) – UA Frankfurt/Main; 15'

Dem Werk ist ein Zitat aus Adornos *Ästhetischer Theorie* vorangestellt: "Offen ist indessen die Frage nach der Dimension des Simultanen in der Musik insgesamt, die zum bloßen Resultat, einem Irrelevanten, virtuell Zufälligen degradiert worden war."

1972

Gefängnistagebuch für Sopran, Flöte (auch Pikkoloflöte), Klarinette (auch Bassklarinette), Gitarre (auch elektrische Gitarre), Klavier und Schlagzeug (Text: Ho-Chi Minh in deutscher Übersetzung). – I. *Die Nöte des Menschen*; II. *Die Flöte eines Mitgefangenen*; III. *Eigenrat*. – Ms.

[*Politische Lieder*] für Gesang und Klavier: *Der 1. Mai hat 365 Tage!* (Text: Werkstatt Köln, Werkkreis Literatur der Arbeitswelt); *Im Kapitalismus* (Text: Günther Hinz); *Lied vom alten Meier* (Text: Therese Angeloff); *Die armen Reichen* (Text: Werkstatt Köln, nach Richard Limpert). – In: *Politische Lieder '72*; Oberhausen (Asso-Verlag), 1972, 38-39, 56-57, 78-80, 81-83

Senza titolo (due pezzi) für Sopran und Klavier (Text: Ho-Chi Minh in deutscher Übersetzung). – I. *Beschwerlicher Lebensweg*; II. *Mittag*. – Ms.

1973

[*Arbeitersongbuch*] für Gesang und Klavier: *Im Kapitalismus* (Text: Günther Hinz); *Der 1. Mai hat*

365 Tage! (Werkstatt Köln). – In: *Arbeitersongbuch*, hg. Wolfgang Bergmann, Horst Hensel, Peter Kühne und Elke Nyssen; Frankfurt/Main (Fischer), 1973, 26-29

Drei Jahre Volksfront für Gesang und Klavier (Text: Luca Lombardi und Hans-Günther Dicks). – In: *Chile lebt. Gedichte, Lieder, Dokumente*; Oberhausen (Asso-Verlag), 1973, 62-63

Non requiescat. Musica in memoria di Hanns Eisler für 13 Instrumente. – MOE (5154). – UA Witten 1973; 6-7'

Dem Werk ist ein Zitat von Bertolt Brecht vorangestellt: "Musikmachen um der Unvernunft gerecht zu werden, bedeutet: anerkennen, dass es vernünftig sei, Unvernünftiges zu tun."

Streik bei Mannesmann. Szenische Kantate für Solisten, Chor und kleines Orchester (Text: Erika Runge). – Ms. – UA Berlin (Ost) 1973

Die Kantate ist eine Gemeinschaftsproduktion mit Dietrich Boekle, Hans Werner Henze, Niels Frederic Hoffmann, Thomas Jahn und Wilfried Steinbrenner. Lombardi komponierte die Overtüre und den mit *Gewerkschaftssong* bezeichneten Abschnitt.

1974

Ballade vom Geld und den Panzern und *Song von der Krätze* für Gesang und Klavier (Text: Albrecht Betz). – Ms.

1974/75

Prima sinfonia für Orchester. – I. *Conduct*; II. *Canzone*; III. *Lamento per la partenza*. – MOE (5176). – UA Leipzig 1979; 35'

Der Titel des dritten Satzes leitet sich von einem Lied aus den Abruzzen her, das die Sängerin Giovanna Marini dem Komponisten gab. Der Satz enthält weitere Zitate: *El pueblo unido* und *Venceremos* von Sergio Ortega und, ganz zum Schluss, aus Hanns Eislers Kantate *Die Mutter* ("Denn die Besiegten von heute werden die Sieger von morgen sein").

1975

Canzone für Kammerorchester. – MOE (5177). – UA Witten 1975; 9'.

Weitgehend identisch mit dem zweiten Satz der *Prima sinfonia*. Auf der der Partitur vorhergehenden Seite zitiert Lombardi ein sizilianisches Volkslied in italienischer und deutscher Sprache: "Chiagni mugghiere mia marito persu—Beweine den verlorenen Mann, meine Frau."

Essay für Kontrabass. – SUV (8164). – UA Royan (Frankreich) 1976; 10'

Im Manuskript hat das Werk einen Untertitel: *Musica per Paul Dessau*. Der Kontrabassist muss in dem Stück das Lied *Die Thälmannkolonne* anstimmen, das Dessau während des Spanischen Bürgerkriegs komponierte.

1976

Gespräch über Bäume für 9 Instrumente. – MOE (5195). – Nürnberg und Erlangen 1976; 9'
Der Partitur ist ein Brecht-Zitat vorangestellt, das sich auf den Titel bezieht: "Was sind das für Zeiten, wo / Ein Gespräch über Bäume fast ein Verbrechen ist, / Weil es ein Schweigen über so viele Untaten einschließt!"

[*Lieder aus dem Schlaraffenland*] für Gesang und Klavier: *Moritat vom alten Meier* (Text: Therese Angeloff); *Der 1. Mai hat 365 Tage!* (Text: Werkstatt Köln); *Im Kapitalismus* (Text: Günther Hinz), *Gewerkschaftssong* (Erika Runge)—auch in *Streik bei Mannesmann* (siehe 1973); *Die armen Reichen* (Werkstatt Köln, nach Richard Limpert); *Die Volksfront von Chile* (Text: Quilapayun, Luca Lombardi, Hans-Günther Dicks); *Drei Jahre Volksfront* (Text: Luca Lombardi, Hans-Günther Dicks). – In: *Lieder aus dem Schlaraffenland. Politische Lieder der 50er-70er Jahre*, hg. Annemarie Stern; Oberhausen (Asso-Verlag), 1976, 154-55, 296-97, 302-03, 322-23, 515-17, 600-01, 614-15

Alle fronde dei salici für 12 Stimmen (Text: Salvatore Quasimodo). – SUV (8691). – UA?; 6

1977

Hasta que caigan las puertas del odio für 16 Stimmen (Text: Pablo Neruda). – SUV (8313). – UA Paris 1977; 8'

Tui-Gesänge für Sopran und 5 Instrumente (Text: Albrecht Betz). – I. *Eröffnung*; II. *Behauste und Unbehauste*; III. *Wie wird man Tui?*; IV. *Von Generation zu Generation*; V. *Rückversicherung*; VI. *Sonett von den Ungleichheiten*; VII. *Sonett von den hemmenden Begierden*; VIII. *Von der Potenz früher und heute*; IX. *Rechtspflege*; X. *Lob, Lohn und Preis*; XI. *Kunst des Unterscheidens*; XII. *Tui-Kreislauf*. – SUV (8397 Partitur; 8398 Stimmen [Leihmaterial]) – Paris 1978; 25'

Der Partitur geht ein Brecht-Zitat voraus: "Der TUI ist der / InTellektUelle / dieser Zeit der Märkte und Waren".

Variazioni su "Avanti popolo alla riscossa" für Klavier. – MOE (5179). – UA Reggio Emilia 1977; 18'

Variazioni für Orchester. – SUV (8524 Partitur; 8525 Stimmen [Leihmaterial]) – Rom 1985; 18'
Die *Variazioni* sind eine Orchesterbearbeitung des vorangehenden Klavierwerkes: *Variazioni su "Avanti popolo alla riscossa"*.

1978/79

Klavierduo für 2 Klaviere. – I. *Gradus de Parnasso*; II. *Scherzino*; III. *Les Moutons de Panurge de Frédéric Rzewski (con alcune licenze)*. – SUV (9079). – UA Athen 1979; 15'

Das Werk existiert auch in einer Fassung für 2 Klaviere und Kammerorchester unter dem Titel *Tre pezzi* (siehe 1987).

1979

E subito riprende il viaggio. Frammenti di Ungaretti für 5 Sänger (2 Soprane, 2 Tenöre, Bariton) (Text: Giuseppe Ungaretti). – SUV (8666). – UA Witten 1980; 14'

1979/80

Majakowski. Kantate für Bass, gemischten Chor und 7 Instrumente (Text: Wladimir Majakowski). I. *Mit aller Stimmkraft*; II. *Du*; III. *Wolkenkratzer im Längsschnitt*; IV. *Zweierlei Berlin*; V. *Lilitschka!*; VI. *Nach Hause*; VII. *Tragödie Majakowskis (Prolog)*; VIII. *Marsch der Zeit (nach H. Eisler)*; IX. *Letzter Brief*; X. *An Sergej Jessenin*; XI. *Mit aller Stimmkraft (2)*. – SUV (8692 Partitur; 8693 Stimmen [Leihmaterial]). – UA Basel 1982; 35'

1980

Einklang für Oboe und 7 Instrumente (Englischhorn, Posaune, Pauke, Klavier, Viola, Violoncello, Kontrabass). – RIC (134146). – UA Berlin (Ost) 1981; 20'

1980/81

Mythenasche für Sopran, Bariton, Chor und Kammerorchester (Text: Albrecht Betz). – I. *Prolog*; II. *Spiegelung*; III. *Danaes Erben*; IV. *Sisyphos*; V. *Psychedelische Kälber (Rock-Musik 1)*; VI. *Phönix*; VII. *Farbwechsel*; VIII. *Epilog*. – SUV (8823 Partitur; 8824 Stimmen [Leihmaterial]). – UA Witten 1981; 26'

1981

Seconda sinfonia für Orchester. – SUV (8968 Partitur; 8969 Stimmen [Leihmaterial]). – UA Leipzig 1983; 14'

1982

Ophelia-Fragmente für Sopran und Klavier (Text: Heiner Müller, *Die Hamletmaschine*). – I. *Das Europa der Frau*; II. *Wildharrend / In der furchtbaren Rüstung / Jahrtausende*. – RIC (134000). – UA Berlin (Ost) 1983; 14'

Am Anfang der Partitur steht eine Widmung "den trotzdem Hoffenden!" und ein Rimbaud-Zitat: "Ciel! Amour! Liberté! Quel rêve, ô pauvre Folle!"

1983

Sei bagatelle di fine estate für verschiedene Instrumente. – I. *Atropos*; II. *Bagatella*; III. *Disparate Nr. 1*; IV. *Disparate Nr. 2*; V. *Disparate Nr. 3*; VI. *Frammento di un'elegia*. – SUV (9276 Partitur; 9277 Stimmen [Leihmaterial]). – UA Berlin (West) 1983; 16'

1983/84

La notte di San Silvestro. Ouverture per orchestra. – SUV (9326 Partitur; 9327 Leihmaterial). – UA Dresden 2003; 8'

1984

Sisyphos für 8 Instrumente (Bassflöte, Bassklarinette, Mandoline, Gitarre, Marimba, Harfe, Viola und Kontrabass). – SUV (9341 Partitur, 9342 Stimmen [Leihmaterial]). – UA Tilburg, Niederlande 1984; 6-7'

Sisyphos II für 14 Instrumente. – SUV (9409 Partitur; 9410 Stimmen [Leihmaterial]). – UA Bozen 1984; 14'

1985

Sisifo felice für 8 Instrumente. – RIC (134001). – UA Rom 1985; 10'

Der Partitur ist ein längeres Zitat aus *Le mythe de Sisyphe* von Albert Camus vorangestellt.

1986

Ai piedi del faro für konzertanten Kontrabass und 8 Instrumente. – RIC (134188). – UA Rom 1986; 20'

Am Anfang der Partitur steht ein Zitat aus *Das Prinzip Hoffnung* von Ernst Bloch: "Am Fuß des Leuchtturms ist kein Licht."

1986-1990

Faust. Un travestimento. Oper in 3 Akten und 12 Szenen (Text: Edoardo Sanguineti). – RIC (135534 Partitur; 135537 Klavierauszug von Stefano Gervasoni und Massimiliano Viel). – UA Basel 1991; 150'

Die Oper erfuhr 1993 in deutscher Übersetzung (Claus H. Henneberg) eine zweite Uraufführung: in Weimar.

1987

La Canzone di Greta für Sopran und Streichquartett (Text: aus *Faust. Un travestimento* von Edoardo Sanguineti). – RIC (134401). – UA Rom 1987; 15'

Das Lied erscheint auch in Lombardis Oper *Faust. Un travestimento* (Akt 2, Szene 4).

1987/88

Due ritratti für Orchester. - I. *Ahimé*; II. *La Notte di Valpurga* – RIC (134688). – UA Lugano 1989; 20'

Das erste Porträt erscheint auch als Intermezzo in Lombardis Faust-Oper; das zweite benutzt Materialien aus der Oper.

1987/90

Con Faust. Quadri sinfonici dall'opera Faust. Un travestimento, für Orchester (und Chor *ad libitum*). – I. *Ahimé*; II. *La notte di Valpurga*. – RIC (135526). – UA Saarbrücken 1992; 23'

Auch dieses Stück steht im Zusammenhang mit Lombardis Faust-Oper. Der erste Satz ist praktisch identisch mit dem ersten der *Due Ritratti*; das zweite ist eine erweiterte Fassung des zweiten Porträts.

1988

Ein Lied für Sopran, Flöte, Klarinette und Klavier (Text: Else Lasker-Schüler). – RIC (134801). – UA Berlin (Ost) 1989; 12'

1988/89

Sisyphos III für Sprechstimme und Instrumentalensemble (Text: Heiner Müller). – RIC (134993). – UA Frankfurt/Main 1989; 13'

Luca Lombardi, Selected Writings

The numbers below refer to the *Catalogo delle opera di Luca Lombardi*, ed. Gabriele Becheri (Rome: Rai Trade, 2005).

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|---------|--|
| 1968-2 | Il compito del compositore oggi (The Task of the Composer Today) |
| 1971-3 | Über kollektive Komposition (On Collective Composition) |
| 1971-4 | Vom Zufall, von der Improvisation und der Freiheit in der Musik
(Of Chance, Improvisation, and Freedom in Music) |
| 1973-10 | Rivoluzione della musica e musica della rivoluzione: Hanns Eisler, o di
un'alternativa
(Revolution of Music and Music of Revolution: Hanns Eisler—an Alternative?) |
| 1975-3 | Musica colta e folklore (Art Music and Folklore) |
| 1977-4 | Überlegungen zum Thema Musik und Politik (Reflection on Music and Politics) |
| 1980-4 | Ritorno al disordine—Postilla (Return to Disorder—A Postscript) |
| 1981-6 | [Wittener Tage für Neue Kammermusik] (Witten Festival of New Chamber Music) |
| 1983-1 | Konstruktion der Freiheit (Construction of Freedom) |
| 1984-5 | Tra l'incudine dei Conservatori e il Martello del mercato musicale
(Between the Anvil of the Conservatories and the Hammer of the Musical
Marketplace) |
| 1985-6 | Erinnerungen (vorausschauend) an Bernd Alois Zimmermann
(Bernd Alois Zimmermann Remembered (by Looking Ahead)) |
| 1987-2 | Tra preistoria e postmoderno (Between Prehistory and Postmodernism) |

- 1988-1 Vom Elfenbeinturm zum Turm zu Babel (From the Ivory Tower to the Tower of Babel)
- 1990-1 Die Schöne im Fischteich: Von einigen Schwierigkeiten beim Vermitteln der musikalischen Wahrheit[en] (The Beautiful Woman in the Fish Pond: Difficulties in Communicating Musical Truth[s])
- 1991-4 Von Brillen, nämlich ideologischen, und ebenso ideologischen Mauern (Of Ideological Glasses and Similarly Ideological Walls)
- 2000-1 Der Künstler und die Macht: Notate zu den Opern *Faust* und *Dmitri* (The Artist and the Power: Remarks on the Operas *Faust* and *Dmitri*)
- 2002-3 Desiderio e paura della libertà: Arnold Schönberg a cinquant'anni della morte (Desire and Fear of Freedom: Arnold Schoenberg on the Fiftieth Anniversary of His Death)
- 2003-3 Pensando a Petrassi (Thoughts about Petrassi)
- 2003-7 Vom Sinn der Musik (On the Meaning of Music)
- 2003-8 Wiederkehr und Fortschritt: Wolfgang Rihm zum 50. Geburtstag (Return and Progress: Wolfgang Rihm on His Fiftieth Birthday)
- 2004-1 Dessau nella DDR (Dessau in the DDR)
- 2004-4 Il sentimento religioso di un non credente (Religious Sentiments of a Non-Believer)
- 2009-x [Erinnerungen an Friedrich Goldmann] (Remembering Friedrich Goldmann)

Reading Samples: Luca Lombardi

Il compito del compositore oggi / The Task of the Composer Today (1968)

Ma qual'è finalmente il compito del compositore? Dopo più di cinquant'anni di riflessione solipsistica sugli "strumenti del mestiere" il compositore deve guadagnare in nuovo contatto col pubblico. Egli deve fare in modo che la sua musica non sia esclusiva fruizione di una aristocrazia ma che essa raggiunga i grandi strati della popolazione finora esclusi e contribuisca così alla presa di coscienza delle masse e alla rivoluzione culturale. Musicalmente questo significa l'abbandono di ogni avanguardismo fine a sé stesso e formalistico (un avanguardismo perfettamente integrato nel sistema derlla società borghese di cui accettae fa propria dinamica). ... Significa che il compositore deve finalmente abbandonare la famosa torre d'avorio per

scendere di nuovo tra il popolo, rendersi consapevole e svolgere i grandi temi attuali e combattere con le proprie armi la battaglia per una nuova e più giusta società.

But what should be, after all, the task of the composer? After more than fifty years of solipsistic reflection on his “tools of the trade,” the composer must earn a new contact with the public. ... He must see to it that his music not be an exclusive gratification for an elite, but that it reach the broadest strata of a population heretofore excluded, and that it can thus contribute to the people’s gaining of awareness and to cultural revolution. Musically speaking, this means abandoning any formalistic avant-gardism as an end in itself (an avant-gardism perfectly integrated into the system of middle-class society). ... It means that the composer must finally abandon his famous ivory tower and come down once more among the people, make himself aware of and deal with the great themes of our day, and fight with his own weapons in the battle for a new and more just society.

[Wittener Tage für Neue Kammermusik] (1981)

Ich glaube nämlich, dass wir heute in einer musikalisch interessanten Zeit leben, in der wir uns von vielen Zwängen befreit haben, die die Musik der Nachkriegszeit oft eingeengt haben, und dass wir mit einer neugewonnenen Freiheit arbeiten können. Nicht die Wahl eines bestimmten Materials oder einer bestimmten Technik entscheidet über die Gültigkeit eines Werkes, sondern ob bestimmte Materialien oder Techniken, über die wir frei verfügen können, zweckmäßig, nämlich dem Inhalt und der Funktion des einzelnen Werkes entsprechend eingesetzt worden sind. ... Es gibt keine Aspekte der sehr reichen und widersprüchlichen Wirklichkeit, die man nicht behandeln sollte. ... Vor allem soll man—und das gehört auch zur neuen Freiheit—keine Angst haben, eine richtig verstandene, widersprüchliche Schönheit in der Musik anzustreben. Ich muss daran denken, was Hanns Eisler sagte: “Sie werden sich wundern, ich lese Brecht nicht, weil er ein Marxist ist, sondern weil er schön ist.”

I believe that we live, today, in musically interesting times, since we have shed the many constraints that often restricted music of the post-war period, and I believe that we can work with a newly acquired freedom. It is not the choice of material or a certain technique that determines the quality of a work of art but whether certain materials and techniques that we have at our disposal are used appropriately, i.e., in accordance with the content and the function of the individual work. ... There are no aspects of the overly rich and contradictory reality which should not be treated by the artist. ... Especially—and this is an aspect of the new freedom as well—we should not be afraid to strive for a correctly understood and contradictory beauty in music. I want to remind you of what Hanns Eisler said: “You may be surprised, but I read Brecht not because he is a Marxist but because he is beautiful.”

Von Brillen, nämlich ideologischen, und ebenso ideologischen Mauern / Of Ideological Glasses and Similarly Ideological Walls (1990)

Allerdings nutzte mir die ideologische Brille auf die Dauer wenig. ... Wie jede Diktatur, so hat auch das SED-Regime, das sich bestimmt nicht durch zuviel Sozialismus, sondern durch Usurpation dieses Begriffes auszeichnete, Feigheit und intellektuelle Korruption gefördert. Allmählich musste ich einsehen, dass dieser Staat, der mit den Widersprüchen des Kapitalismus aufräumen wollte, von Widersprüchen nur so strotzte. ... Es war Anfang der achtziger Jahre, als sich mein Weltbild zu ändern begann: Der "Optimismus des Willens" wich dem "Pessimismus der Einsicht." Es ist kein Zufall, dass ich in diesen Jahren meine ersten "Sisyphos"-Stücke komponierte, Stücke, deren pessimistische, um nicht zu sagen nihilistische Einstellung mich nachträglich fast erschreckte. In einem Text von 1986 ("Zwischen Prähistorie und Postmoderne") verabschiedete ich mich endlich—es war ein langer, widersprüchlicher Prozess—von einer letzten Endes teleologisch-messianisch-idealistischen Konzeption der Geschichte. ... Heute versuche ich, stärker als zuvor, von der konkreten Realität auszugehen, die ideologische Brille habe ich weggeschmissen. ...

PS. ... Die Mauer, die zwischen Westen und Osten gefallen ist, war auch in meinem Kopf schon lange baufällig.

In the long run, the ideological glasses were of little use for me. ... Like every dictatorship, the East German had supported cowardice and intellectual corruption; it certainly was characterized not by too much socialism but by usurping the term. Sooner or later, I had to arrive at the conclusion that this state, which wanted to abolish the contradictions of capitalism, really abounded with contradictions. ... In the early 1980s my world view began to change. The "optimism of will" gave way to the "pessimism of insight." It was no coincidence that in these years I composed my first Sisyphus pieces—works whose pessimistic, even nihilistic attitude in retrospect almost frightens me. In an essay of 1986 ("Between Prehistory and Postmodernism") I finally said farewell—it had been a long and contradictory process—to a conception of history that, in the final analysis, is teleological, messianic, and idealistic. ... Today I am trying, more than before, to start from concrete reality; I have thrown away the ideological glasses.

PS. ... The wall that has come down between East and West had been crumbling for a long time also in my head.

Source: Luca Lombardi, *Construction of Freedom and Other Writings* (trans. Thomas Donnan and Jürgen Thym, ed. Jürgen Thym), Baden-Baden: Valentin Koerner Verlag, 2006.

