

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

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 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 against 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 both 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 paper, 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, social 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 Germany seemed to be reflected also in music and musicology. In other words, the Cold War left its traces in seemingly non-political areas. 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 the titles 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 list of works 1968-1990 and list selected writings.**) 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 vita that, beyond language, is reflected in a most characteristic way for Lombardi's thinking and composing. 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, a positioning between chairs—are 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 reading sample #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.” The statement aims high, no doubt about it; true, it is somewhat formulaic and perhaps not entirely thought through, but the essay fragment shows, already at age 22, the coordinates and the fighting spirit that were to determine Lombardi’s 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 traditionally reserved by 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 attended also composition courses with Kagel,

Globokar, Pousseur, and Schnebel. Lombardi never quite advanced to the inner circle of Stockhausen acolytes (such as Gehlhaar, Fritsch, and the Kontarsky brothers), 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), but, 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, said Beethoven, that is an Ocean) for 7 performers (both 1968). [The latter, taking its point of departure from the E-flat minor Prelude of Bach's *Das Wohltemperierte Klavier* I, 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, also posthumous 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 as well as 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 aseptically sterile atmosphere of the Utrecht Studio for Electronic Music in the Netherlands, Lombardi was aided in a crisis (and he 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 people-owned company or VEB 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 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 bound 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. **(See list of selected works, 1968-1990.)** And sometimes—his striving for political relevance was open also for this possibility—he did not compose at all, but produced an audio play, decidedly 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 somewhat poster-like (and thus “symphonic”) but which definitely is not agitprop; it is dedicated to the Chilean people in its struggle after the CIA-inspired coup d’état in 1973 (another event, by the way, carrying the date 9/11), 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 with their 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 big 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. (Luigi Nono happened to be present and could only shake his head.)

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, like Eisler a Brecht collaborator and no doubt one of the leading, if not the most prominent, figure on the musical scene of the DDR at the time. 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, by necessity, 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 even 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]." 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 to be clear that Lombardi did not just talk about "dialectics"—a term very much overused (and thus abused) by the Left—but 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 the least—through the texts set in his compositions.

And not only his music, but also his writings reflect the bipolarity of Lombardi's 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 that artists may 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 openness of mind and tolerance with which he copes with opposing standpoints, especially how, on the contrary, 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 bubbles and banners. In an essay "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—its Munich publishing house had the reputation of being close to the regime in East Berlin), 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. 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. Craftiness applied to attain rational goals, or perhaps: Hegel's "List der Vernunft" at work.

Constructing a New Freedom

In his writings Lombardi seems to resist being appropriated by his supporters (and thereby 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 reading sample #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 still occupied with itself—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 fated 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, 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: the mythological figure of Sisyphus, who, in Albert Camus’ interpretation, accepts the absurdity of his fate with pride and without lamenting: namely to roll a rock up a mountain over and over again; and the legendary (and very German) character of Faust, who, in the “*verfremdet*” interpretation of Goethe’s drama through 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 **reading sample #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 here by and large to the Eastern part of the two Germanies. 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 to 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.) Even 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 (and both protagonists knew something about the powerful and the powerless), 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 aesthetic 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), and this openness—paradoxically—might 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 play for you *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 pages 1-4 of handout**), and sometimes rigorously precise (**see pages 5-8**), 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 one not familiar with it as an oasis of welcome familiarity. Yes, there is a minimum of compositional preparation before the *Solidaritätslied* enters (**see pages 5-8**) and, even after it has sounded, fragments of it seem to reverberate later on, but 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 *Solidaritätslied* 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.