Since the mid-1960s, just after the time at which Jameson posits the emergence of postmodernist aesthetics,1 German musicians and producers, operating in a range of fields of musical production from highbrow Ernste-Musik (‘serious music’) to jazz and rock, have experimented with notions of Weltmusik (a term I will not translate since, in German discourses, Weltmusik has tended to signify western music in which various musical components are thought to synthesise into a whole, whereas the English term ‘world music’ has often been used by the music industry as a marketing label to represent ‘authentic’ musics from the margins).2 These musicians include the high modernist Karlheinz Stockhausen, the various modern jazz musicians who participated in the producer Joachim-Ernst Berendt’s Jazz Meets the World Series (1965–71) and Weltmusik summits (1983–85), the ‘Krautrock’ group CAN (with its so-called Ethnographic Forgery Series, 1968–78), and others. Weltmusik activities have not been ‘merely’ musical; they have frequently been subjected to considerable ideological interpretation. Readers familiar with English-language debates about ‘world music’ and ‘world beat’ - debates conducted with a vehemence that escalated markedly in the 1990s - will not be surprised to learn this. As David Bennett has shown in a recent article, following Steven Feld’s useful typology, the positions taken in these Anglophone debates generally adhere to either ‘anxious’ or ‘celebratory’ narratives of world music. Anxious narratives, taking a neo-Marxist tack, tend to focus on the ways in which western musicians and the large recording companies, protected by their position of relative economic power and by copyright law, are able to appropriate (or expropriate) musical material from the margins and turn a profit from it, a profit in which the musical creators from the margins do not equally share. By contrast, the celebratory narratives stress ideas of ‘fluidity, hybridity and collaborative exchange … underpinned by postmodern anti-essentialist theories of the performative, dialogical and porous nature of all cultural identities’.3 While the German discourses of Weltmusik reflect many similar concerns, this article will show how and why they diverge from their Anglophone counterparts. Significantly, the German debates were initiated well before the rise of ‘world music’ and ‘world beat’ as marketing terms in the English-speaking world in the mid-1980s, and they were strongly influenced by the comparatively recent memory of National Socialism. For this reason, they were also highly polemical.

My analysis will focus, in particular, on the notions advanced by J-E. Berendt, as one of the foremost and longest-running champions of Weltmusik, as well as on the critiques that he attracted from German critics, musicologists, sociologists and philosophers, including Peter Sloterdijk and others. I shall examine how a peculiarly German antinationalist Weltmusik discourse has been informed by the trauma of National Socialism, just as it has contended with postmodernity and broader anxieties (also reflected in the wider English-language discourses on world music).
about the breakdown of grand narratives and with utopian hopes arising from the processes of
globalisation. My aim is thus to unpack the paradoxical meanings of Weltmusik as a music that
acknowledges the fragmentation of (post)modernity and yet yearns for a new wholeness - and
as a music that deliberately questions earlier notions of cultural essentialism and is capable of
celebrating cultural inauthenticity, but which still retains concepts of ‘otherness’. Finally, the essay
performs what the musicologist Veit Erlmann calls an ethnography of Weltmusik, by analysing
some of the ways in which the experience of ‘authentic’ alterity and global communication
have been constructed within extra-musical discourses (such as in articles, cover notes, concert
and record reviews). It also examines the processes in which - to use an expression of Timothy
Taylor’s - ‘different sounds’ have been mobilised in Germany ‘as a way of constructing and/or
solidifying new identities’.

Georgina Born observes that ‘it is because music lacks denotative meaning, in contrast with
the visual and literary arts, that it has particular powers of connotation’. Within the German
tradition, there is a long history of burdening music with ideological (or ‘extra-musical’) content
integrated with wider discourses - such as those of nation and race. This was particularly so in
the Romantic era; among other things, the early Romantics tied music to the humanist idea
of international communication. However, a low point was reached in the nineteenth century
with Richard Wagner’s notorious 1850 article, ‘Judaism in Music’, which assayed the so-called
‘Hebraic art taste’ and set some of the parameters for German antisemitism. In the twentieth
century, the connotative links drawn between music and politics would be no less tendentious,
especially in the cases of jazz and, later, Weltmusik, which grew out of jazz but was also partly
informed by avant-garde art music and by the growth in popular interest in international folk
musics.

Given the jazz roots of Weltmusik, it is instructive to review the difficult reception of jazz in
Germany. It, too, was subjected to both ‘anxious’ and ‘celebratory’ interpretations that, as with
the later debates about Weltmusik, highlight the difficulties in fixing ideological meaning to
music. The importation of American jazz into Germany in the years after World War I - initially
in recorded form, but soon thereafter as live music - polarised German commentators. Some
highbrow music critics and publicists regarded this new music, with its emphasis on rhythm,
positively: it was thought to represent the ‘potential for rejuvenating classical music gone stale
in the works of postromantic epigones’. But the enthusiasm was not unproblematic: it was
sometimes couched in explicitly racist terms. When, for example, Dr Hoch’s Conservatorium in
Frankfurt advertised its new jazz course in 1927, the director Bernhard Sekles referred to jazz’s
appeal as a ‘transfusion of fresh nigger blood’. Whatever their motivation, many Weimar writers
and composers, including Bertolt Brecht, Kurt Weill and Ernst Krenek, were all inspired by jazz
and so, too, were many young people who danced to the music during the Hyperinflation and
‘Golden Twenties’. However, the enthusiasm was by no means universal; the Weimar democrat
Gustav Stresemann once baldly declared that jazz was not music at all, and the critical theorist
and musicologist Theodor W. Adorno famously railed against it, too. By Adorno’s account,
jazz was a mass-produced commodity peddled within a ‘culture industry’ that prevented free,
critical thought, and it was particularly insidious inasmuch as the ‘jazz-subject’ (who exhibited
the traits of the ‘authoritarian personality’) was hoodwinked by the small amount of musical
freedom the form offered, and even sadomasochistically enjoyed its lack of true freedom.  

In the circumstances, it is unsurprising that conservatives and National Socialist ideologues also objected to jazz: conservatives associated it with decadence, inner emptiness and ‘Americanism’, while some Nazis went further, associating the mongrelised ‘Nigger-Jew-Jazz’ with the far-fetched notion of a Negro-Jewish plot ‘entrap[ping] Nordic German womanhood in sordid sexuality’ - jazz was traduced as a musical temptation towards racial defilement. Accordingly, piecemeal radio bans on the form and regional decrees against swing dancing were introduced. Despite the rhetoric, the situation of jazz during the Third Reich was far from simple. While there were Gestapo crackdowns directed against ‘Swing Heinis’ - jazz enthusiasts who rejected the Hitler Youth and formed regional subcultures - various Nazis privately enjoyed jazz and Goebbels, for one, recognised the need for danceable music, particularly as German morale began to flag after war was declared against Russia. In this climate, swing-like music - duly re-badged as ‘German dance and entertainment music’ - was soon being promoted.

As well as marking the end of a devastating war and a turning-point in German political and cultural history, 1945 signalled the arrival on West German soil of American troops with their consumer goods (including jazz records) and their taste for live music entertainment. The postwar era heralded changes in the symbolic capital associated with modernist art-forms formerly stigmatised as ‘degenerate’ by the National Socialists. But there were also continuities, including for the set-upon jazz enthusiasts. Outspoken conservative opposition to jazz continued to be voiced at least until the mid-1950s, and during the late 1940s, in particular, many radio listeners objected to broadcasts of the music – despite the fact that very little of it was actually played - in terms not far removed from those that had been employed by Nazi ideologues. In this context, jazz broadcasters and enthusiasts diagnosed an ideological hangover from the Nazi era, congruent with the survival of popular antisemitism in postwar Germany and what Jan-Werner Müller has called the Federal Republic’s ‘post-fascist democratic deficit’ during the 1950s. For some German jazz enthusiasts, the task of legitimating jazz, of imbuing it with symbolic capital in a field of cultural production still very much sharply polarised between art music and entertainment, was regarded as an almost moral obligation. Creating an audience for jazz was a political task of enlightenment - the music was seen as fulfilling a similar role to that envisioned for literature by the Gruppe 47.

At the grass-roots level, American popular culture held appeal for many younger Germans during the 1950s, for several reasons, one of which was that the American government recognised the value of American popular music in ‘mak[ing] friends for the US’, a task seen as imperative in the context of the Cold War. Jazz was accordingly broadcast on the far-reaching ‘Voice of America’ radio programmes and so-called ‘Jazz Ambassadors’ were sent on overseas tours. Secondly, jazz, with its danceability (at least prior to bebop) and its moments of Dionysian ecstasy, also spoke to the emotional needs and the habitus of some young Germans of the so-called ‘sceptical generation’, for whom more staid, traditional forms of music and social dancing seemed manifestly out-of-date. However, the political associations of jazz in West Germany lent it a high and distinctive value in addition to its other attractions.

Joachim-Ernst Berendt was one enthusiast for whom jazz’s political dimension was crucial. Born in 1922, Berendt’s experience of the Third Reich was particularly traumatic: he was both a
perpetrator (drafted into the army in the early 1940s and sent to the Eastern Front) and a victim of the regime, not least because his father, an outspoken protestant minister, was interned and died in Dachau.\textsuperscript{30} After the war, Berendt was employed by the \textit{Südwestfunk} public broadcaster and quickly established himself as West Germany’s foremost authority on jazz: as the so-called ‘jazz pope’ he would not shy away from attacking Adorno’s increasingly old-fashioned interpretation of jazz in a debate in the highbrow journal \textit{Merkur}. However, it was Berendt’s \textit{Jazzbuch}, which quickly became a bestseller, that really helped to legitimate the music in Germany:\textsuperscript{31} it made the claim that by virtue of its restless stylistic development, jazz followed a pattern set by western art culture, especially during the modernist era, and was itself a quintessentially modern art-form.\textsuperscript{32}

Berendt’s writings from the 1950s also show how he cast jazz as the ideological antithesis of National Socialism. First, he claimed that, in its very essence, jazz was a liberal and democratic art form, as evidenced by the National Socialist and Eastern Bloc’s opposition to jazz, which Berendt summed up in his aphorism ‘dictators don’t swing’. More speculatively, he sought to ground this liberal essence in jazz’s rhythmic nature, suggesting that rhythm itself entailed the idea of listening to one’s opponent.\textsuperscript{33} While dismissing the sloganistic American notion that jazz was the most ‘democratic’ music of the century, he asserted - following Alfred Döblin, the modernist author of \textit{Berlin Alexanderplatz} - that jazz was a ‘climate … in which democracy plays itself out’.\textsuperscript{34} This trope had clear implications in postwar West Germany and its power was even recognised by the arch-conservative Defence Minister Franz-Josef Strauss in August 1958, when he launched a \textit{Bundeswehr} military jazz band and thereby sought to distinguish between the jazz-loving Federal Republic, the Third Reich and the GDR:

The totalitarian systems of government see a hostile, destructive element in jazz … We also experienced that in the Third Reich. Declaredly, the ‘free elements’ of jazz music do not sit well with the regimentation that totalitarian systems of government care to use. Jazz, with its individual musicality, its joy in improvisation, its freedom to have many forms and its power to create communities of interest, does not fit the image by which the dictators want to change the world by brutal force.\textsuperscript{35}

Berendt also drew new attention to the issue of race in jazz: while maintaining the National Socialists’ association of jazz with African-Americans and Jews, he made a virtue of it, suggesting that being a jazz musician (or enthusiast) rendered one sympathetic to the plight of racial minorities:

As a jazz musician, one has sympathy for minorities anyway - not only as a black jazz musician, because one belongs to a racial minority, but also as a jazz musician per se, because one has a minority taste – and finally simply because, after the negroes [it is] the Jews who have the greatest share in the racial background of the most important jazz musicians.\textsuperscript{36}

In a complex way, Berendt’s playing on the links between jazz, African-Americans and Jews allowed for what Katrin Sieg, in another context, calls a ‘triangulated surrogation’ of the victims
of the Holocaust. In her study of ‘ethnic drag’ practices in postwar Germany, including theatrical adaptations of Karl May’s western *Winnetou* novels, Sieg shows that this mechanism allowed for a *Wiedergutmachungsphantasie* (fantasy of restitution), whereby some Germans who identified with the victims of American Indian genocide were psychologically enabled to avoid identifying with the perpetrators of the Holocaust. In a context in which ‘race’ and the Holocaust were excised from public discourse, these fictional American Indian victims took the place of real Holocaust victims. The socio-psychological function of this ‘triangulated surrogation’ was to ‘forget’ the Holocaust, its victims and prosecutors, and to substitute fantasies of racial harmony that reworked the terms of that trauma.\(^2\) In a similar way, for some postwar West German jazz enthusiasts (including those who may, as individuals, have been perpetrators of one sort or another) jazz acted as a site in which an identification with another ‘triangulated surrogate’ for the victims of the Holocaust could be made, although this was not necessarily conscious or by any means the only factor in play.

The final way in which Berendt associated jazz with positive political content during the 1950s was to advance the trope of jazz as an essentially international and ‘universal’ music. This idea was not without exponents in other countries - in the USA, for example, it was used as a marketing technique to attract non-Americans to the Newport Jazz Festival\(^3\) - but it was maintained with particular fervour by West German jazz enthusiasts.\(^4\) This was partly a result of a general postwar West German liberal opposition to nationalism, which was seen as having been a causal factor in the rise of National Socialism. By identifying with an ‘international’ music, young Germans could therefore partly escape the stigma of Germanness.

Paradoxically, however, Berendt actually ‘Germanised’ the idea of jazz’s internationality by investing it with the early Romantic vision of music as a means of international communication. This represented a positive dimension of his ambivalent relationship with Romanticism, much of which, in the words of Susan Sontag, was ‘retroactively haunted by Hitler’.\(^5\) For Berendt, jazz’s ‘internationality’ allowed a continuation of the universalising task set for music during the Romantic era but which, paradoxically, Romantic music itself, with its ultimate emphasis on national styles, had been unable to deliver.\(^6\) Since jazz, like the music of many ‘primitive’ peoples, gave primacy to rhythm, Berendt felt it held the key to universal (musical) understanding and the realisation of the Romantic hypothesis of music as universal language.\(^7\) This idea of intercultural dialogue would continue to be important to Berendt, particularly during the 1960s, as jazz musicians began to engage with world musics.

The early 1960s brought a shift in popular tastes in Germany. Avant-garde jazz became less accessible and the advent of rock ‘n’ roll and ‘beat’ music contributed to its decline in popularity. This decline in popular interest in jazz was viewed with mixed feelings by West German jazz publicists such as Berendt. On one hand, they faced a reduced market for their activities and publications; on the other, jazz was increasingly becoming a legitimated art-form, which had long been the aim. Indeed, jazz was now more acceptable to West German elites and was made so partly by its displacement in popular culture by the more raucous rock ‘n’ roll. From 1958, jazz was part of the curriculum at the Cologne *Musik hochschule*, and from 1964, it was both sent abroad by the *Goethe Institut* to represent a more modern and relaxed Germany and also granted a heavily subsidised festival of its own in Cold-War-era Berlin (the prestigious Berlin
Jazz Days). From 1967, jazz was officially welcomed (back) to the bastion of musical modernism, the Donaueschingen Music Days.\textsuperscript{43}

As jazz’s legitimacy grew and its popular appeal waned, another genre of popular music, folk music, gained in importance in Germany, assisted by the folk revival in the USA and UK. However, not all folk music was considered equally acceptable. In many ways, foreign folk music acted as a surrogate for domestic German folklore, which was regarded by many - particularly those with a liberal or leftist disposition - as tainted by association with Nazi blood-and-soil ideology.\textsuperscript{44} Hence, interest in what would today be called ‘world musics’ was particularly strong: West German concert promoters assembled successful tours of American folk blues, Spanish flamenco, Brazilian folk and bossa nova and Argentinian folklore, and intellectual young Germans associated attendance at these tours with the distinctive notions of ‘cosmopolitanism, sincerity [and] honour’.\textsuperscript{45}

Modern jazz musicians soon developed an interest in international folklore, too. This was not solely a West German activity - in the USA, avant-gardists such as John Coltrane were engaging more or less superficially with diverse musical traditions from Africa to India\textsuperscript{46} - but the idea was particularly dear to Berendt. Whereas Coltrane did not travel other than phonographically, Berendt and the German musicians whom he encouraged in this direction were able to gain firsthand experience with a range of world musics. This was made possible by a number of factors. First, West German prosperity had been on the rise since the \textit{Wirtschaftswunder} began accelerating in the mid-1950s and this, together with increasingly affordable air travel, brought exotic destinations within reach of everyone, including jazz musicians. In this respect, the \textit{Weltmusik} that eventuated during the 1960s might be said to reflect the ‘moment of late, consumer or multinational capitalism’ with which Jameson associates postmodernist aesthetics.\textsuperscript{47} But there was another, identity-based motivation for the development of \textit{Weltmusik}: a flight from old modes of ‘Germanness’. This was at the heart of the Goethe Institut’s policy of sending German jazz musicians overseas as representatives of the new modern Germany, whence they gained their vital exposure to, and interest in, various world musics.\textsuperscript{48}

Berendt was very early to seize upon the possibility of a jazz-based \textit{Weltmusik}. Starting from a 1962 trip to Asia, he began to produce intercultural musical activities that sought to integrate jazz with world musics, an activity that reached an early zenith in 1967, when he staged a \textit{Jazz Meets the World} concert at the Berlin Jazz Days. Three groups performed on that occasion: a Spanish ‘Jazz Flamenco’ group; Tony Scott and the Indonesian All-Stars, who combined Javanese folklore with jazz; and a ‘Jazz Meets India’ group, which combined free jazz with a North Indian sitar trio.\textsuperscript{49} Combining musicians from quite different traditions was extremely novel in the 1960s, but it was only a beginning. By the time Berendt’s activities as an engineer of intercultural musical encounters had fully developed in 1985, he was inviting large groups of musicians from different traditions to participate in so-called \textit{Weltmusik} ‘summits’. His final \textit{Weltmusik} summit event, which assembled musicians from Europe, Argentina, India, the Caribbean, the USA and Brazil, was recorded live at the Donaueschingen Music Days in October 1985\textsuperscript{50} - by which point, Berendt’s theory of \textit{Weltmusik} was fully fledged.

As Berendt conceived it, \textit{Weltmusik} was as much an outgrowth of the jazz avant-garde as it was an ideological extension of jazz: where jazz had once been the universal, international
language, *Weltmusik* now fulfilled that role.\(^{51}\) In particular, Berendt foregrounded the notion of the ideal intercultural musical ‘encounter’, in which disparate musicians came together on an equal footing, removed from economic or political considerations, and conducted a meaningful and transcendent aesthetic dialogue (without necessarily conceding any of their own territory). As a result of this dialogue, each of the partners was thought to learn and grow. This emphasis on the importance of communicative dialogue has superficial resonances with German sociologist Jürgen Habermas’s theory of communicative action and its ideal of rational ‘non-hegemonic discourse’.\(^{52}\) Like other West Germans of his generation, Habermas (born 1929) has been profoundly influenced by American culture - in his case, by American pragmatics.\(^{53}\) A self-confessed ‘radical liberal’,\(^{54}\) Habermas turned his attention to communication as an analytic focus and to the notion of intersubjective consensus: starting from the relatively trivial assumption that individuals capable of speech will learn, he posits rational communicative action as a way of arriving at truth and justice. Noting that there are certain preconditions for the ideal speech situation in which claims to truth and rightness can be discursively redeemed, Habermas advances a ‘cautious universalism’ that puts him at odds with the French poststructuralists - as does his advocacy of the ‘incomplete project of modernity’.\(^{55}\) As Habermas’s interlocutor in an interview observed, there is a tension between the telos of universal consensus and the human and epistemological value of conflict and diversity.\(^{56}\) This was a point of contention in Habermas’s debate about postmodernism with Jean-Francois Lyotard, the theoretical champion of ‘a war on totality’ and of ‘activat[ing] the differences’.\(^{57}\)

While Berendt’s *Weltmusik* shared Habermas’s focus on communication, on the individual’s growth and learning as a result of intersubjective dialogue and, as we shall see, on some sort of universalism, the normative foundation of the *Weltmusik* encounter was far from rational. Like Stockhausen’s earlier notion of *Telemusik*, it was grounded in what Timothy Taylor might call ‘transcultural mysticism’.\(^{58}\) According to Berendt, the basis on which these *Weltmusik* musicians were able to communicate was the commonality of certain musical ‘universals’ or buried musical ‘archetypes’ (in the Jungian sense), capable of being accessed spiritually by the musician, by searching within him- or herself. One ‘universal’ Berendt advanced was the western harmonic system. He relied on the hypothesis that the human ear is capable of ‘correctively hearing’ musical tones that diverge marginally from a so-called ‘universal’ (European) harmonic system. In this way, exotic harmonic systems were to be construed as mere variants of the western system.

The *Weltmusik* encounter clearly had significant utopian value for Berendt, who was influenced by a deep, at times apocalyptic, cultural pessimism that was not necessarily unusual for the early 1980s in West Germany. At that time, there were widespread concerns about nuclear annihilation and a concomitant rise of the Greens and New Ageism.\(^{59}\) The musicologist Wolfgang Martin Stroh has analysed the German New Age phenomenon at length. Following Wolfgang Welsch’s theory about postmodernity, he considers that - at a sociopsychological level - the New Age movement is a response to a ‘fundamental crisis in postmodern societies’. He reasons that the basic maxim of modernity (which was sustained both by liberal-capitalist theory and by Marxist theory) was that humankind was making a progressive development. However, the plethora of seemingly intractable problems which the world now faces - from world hunger through to ecological crisis and war - is such that faith in that fundamental maxim has been seriously
shaken. This has given rise in many Germans to a basic need to break out of the feeling of being trapped in a cycle of powerlessness, and it is precisely this psychological need that the New Age movement addresses: New Ageism is 'a manifestation not only of a new need, but also of a large-scale attempt at therapy by working over the globally repressed through the production of new ideas and notions of action'.

In Berendt’s view, Weltmusik musicians were putting forth several such new ideas for dealing with the ills of the world. For one, their eclectic music-making suggested a way in which the fragmented, overly-'specialised' modern world might be reassembled into a new whole. Their intercultural collegiality also acted as a model for an overdue cosmopolitanism - a notion that was an extension of Berendt’s jazz theories, conditioned by the trauma of National Socialism. Like its jazz counterpart, Weltmusik discourse was influenced by the rejection of German nationalism in favour of West German 'post-nationalist' models of identity such as that advanced by Habermas.

Berendt’s Weltmusik was marked by the experience of Auschwitz in another way, too: it betrayed an extreme sensitivity to the possible survival of latently fascist thought-patterns in Germany. Peter O’Brien has identified a characteristically postwar, West German, liberal Weltanschauung, which interprets modern German history as a protracted struggle between German nationalism and western liberalism. Postwar West German intellectuals, aware that Hitler had come to power more or less democratically, suggested that Germans were somehow ‘philosophically predisposed’ to welcome a dictator. They posited a German Sonderweg (‘special path’) to modernity, which involved a ‘modernized society without a modernized (that is, liberal) citizenry’. According to O’Brien, this Weltanschauung imagined that German nationalism/illiberalism was a ‘dormant virus always capable of revival’. The result was a strong investment in technocratic liberalism and a compulsion to ‘keep vigilant watch for the slightest traces of nationalist revival’. In accordance with this Weltanschauung, Berendt considered that Weltmusik practitioners were helping to illuminate the fundamental porosity and impurity of all cultures, and thereby identifying and combating what he perceived as ‘latent fascist’ thought-patterns in those who were interested in the notion of authentic, pure cultures (a.k.a. races).

This emphasis on the impurity of cultures represents a postmodern dimension of Weltmusik. Berendt’s stress on cultural hybridity and eclecticism aligns him with the ‘postmodern anti-essentialist theories of the performative, dialogical and porous nature of all cultural identities’ subsequently advanced in ‘celebratory’ accounts of world music. However, Berendt’s Weltmusik predates the rise of the hybridity theory of Homi Bhabha and his followers, and appears not to be informed by poststructuralist thought or by any particular psychological insight into the experience of the migrant or the border dweller. Rather, it is part of a rejection of the National Socialist grand narrative of race.

In other ways, Berendt’s deadly serious Weltmusik utopia was a piece of belated (perhaps even last-ditch) modernism, despite his theoretical foregrounding of the harmonic over the dissonance favoured in musical modernism. Conceptually, Weltmusik was thought to be part of the ever-developing avant-garde of jazz, which, as we have seen, was understood as a modernist art-form. In attempting to legitimate jazz, Berendt had stressed its similarity to modernist art music; indeed, he even suggested that it was just as progressive as the latter, an assertion that particularly riled Adorno during their 1953 encounter. His model of Weltmusik, which cited
the arch-modernist Stockhausen’s notions of *Telemusik*, was also modernist in that it retained a sense of what Andreas Huyssen calls the ‘Great Divide’ between modernism and mass culture.\(^\text{73}\)

At a time when German pop groups such as CAN, with its ‘Ethnographic Forgery Series’, were increasingly engaging with world musics, including those of a self-consciously ‘imagined’ variety, Berendt continued to maintain a hierarchy between accomplished forms of art-*Weltmusik* and globalised popular music, which he implicitly regarded as inferior. Berendt’s *Weltmusik* summits, conceived as high art, were performed at Donaueschingen and other, similar venues. This was no accident: given the task of assembling musicians from different traditions and geographical locations, it was not possible to mount such summits without significant institutional support.

The mood of Berendt’s *Weltmusik* was also modernist. For Berendt himself, this was not about the musical subject’s playful expression of what Timothy Taylor calls a ‘double’ identity, in which the binary of ‘self’ and ‘Other’ is circumvented.\(^\text{74}\) While Berendt praised those musicians who were at home in two musical idioms, his interest was predominantly in the intersubjective encounter. However, for some of the musicians who participated in his *Jazz Meets the World* series and in later *Weltmusik* productions, it was in fact an opportunity for them to express their ‘double’ identity. When the Indonesian Allstars performed in Berlin in 1967, for example, they asserted that by playing modal jazz versions of Indonesian folklore they were able to draw on their Indonesian roots as well as their background as western jazz enthusiasts, thereby confounding the exoticising expectations of German audiences.\(^\text{75}\) Nor was Berendt’s *Weltmusik* about the postmodern play of sound surfaces or a Jamesonian pastiche of empty signifiers.\(^\text{76}\) The hope he placed in *Weltmusik*’s capacity for demonstrating how new syntheses might be attained was also modernist. The societal fragmentation that Berendt cited in his defence of *Weltmusik* was something he had been labouring since the 1950s: in his first book, for example, he had undertaken to reveal how jazz reflected the chaos of the modern era but also enabled that chaos to be ordered.\(^\text{77}\) His writings about *Weltmusik* therefore contain an ongoing and longstanding melancholia about the loss of past wholeness (albeit one that he would have been at pains to distinguish from the wholeness or holism of National Socialist ideology). For Lyotard, this melancholia is the watchword of modernism rather than of postmodernism.\(^\text{78}\) Such melancholia, together with Berendt’s characteristic distrust of neo-marxism and his concomitant disregard for economic questions in his account of *Weltmusik*, was increasingly out of step with the critical climate of the day and was singled out by younger German critics of the form.

Criticism of Berendt’s *Weltmusik* productions was both musical and ideological, although the one kind often bled into the other. Musically, opinions were sharply divided about the success of the *Jazz Meets the World* concerts and the *Weltmusik* summits. Some queried whether the musicians really managed a mutually fruitful dialogue or had simply traded in superficial similarities and compromised their own territory.\(^\text{79}\) The ‘encounters’ were also criticised as self-consciously forced laboratory experiments or montages.\(^\text{80}\) Usefully, some other reviewers posited a counter-model of *Weltmusik*, stressing the frictions, dissonances and tensions rather than the idea of a ‘universal’ harmonious integration.\(^\text{81}\)

On the ideological front, critics expressed horror at the dystopian prospect - which they saw as implicit within the concept of *Weltmusik* - of a unified and undifferentiated world culture, in which difference was flattened out and culture centralised.\(^\text{82}\) In this respect, criticism of the
Weltmusik ideology was somewhat akin to the contemporaneous critique of Habermas’s telos of universal consensus, which was suspected of having a homogenising effect. Berendt’s sanguine belief that the diffusion of western music did not harm diversity, but rather caused a diversification of world musics, was likewise disputed - the musicologist Peter Niklas Wilson even advanced the problematic view that cultural museums should be built to protect endangered world musics. Wilson’s view is problematic because, as John Corbett rightly observes, ‘[t]he move to disentangle “authentic” ethnic music from its hybridized new-music forms can be seen as a reassertion of the peculiar Western power to define (and preserve) “pure” expressions of cultural ethnicity as opposed to their “tainted” counterparts’; in other words, it engages in what David Byrne calls ‘the authenticity bugaboo’, which is a weak point in ‘anxious’ narratives of world music.

Like ‘anxious’ Anglo-American world-music narratives, Weltmusik critiques were also frequently informed by the memory of colonialism and by recent postcolonial theory. Hence Berendt’s naive account of the international, collegial spread of (western) music - somehow independent of colonialism and mimicry, and divorced from questions of power - was attacked. Taking a neo-marxist perspective, these critics analysed the ‘neo-colonial’ operation of the western capitalist music industry, which was seen to be peddling western pop music throughout the world, destroying authentic cultures or cannibalising them, simply in order to make products more attractive to domestic and third-world markets. This impulse would later be summarised by Stuart Hall in the notion of the ‘global postmodern’, in which global capitalism is seen to be ‘trying to live with, and at the same moment, overcome, sublate, get hold of, and incorporate difference’. Some German critics also objected to the way in which musically inaccurate (yet ideologically soothing and therefore remunerative) tags such as ‘fusion’ or ‘synthesis’ were capitalised upon within Weltmusik discourses.

Many critics also attacked the irrational, spiritual basis of Weltmusik. The pianist George Gruntz - who could speak with some authority, having participated in a long-running series of concerts combining jazz and Tunisian music - criticised the shallow, wishy-washy exoticism of many ‘Jazz Meets India’-type efforts. In a broader critique of New Age music (of which Berendt’s Weltmusik was really a type), Wilson focused on the attempt to re-sacralise music, arguing that it tended to befog critical faculties. He and others objected to the way in which New Age ideologues such as Berendt foregrounded concepts of an underlying harmony and holism - including the notion of a universal harmonic scheme that underpinned Weltmusik theory. Such criticism was significantly influenced by postmodern theory and had more than a passing resemblance to Lyotard’s idea of a war on totality and his foregrounding of difference and le différend.

Berendt’s holistic music ideology was advanced most notably in his 1983 book Nada Brahma - a speculative piece of ‘lay’ philosophy about the nature of hearing which announced that ‘the world is sound/tone’, in other words, that there was a neo-Pythagorean musical uniformity to the world, which could be identified by close listening. It was this underlying uniformity that, inter alia, allowed Weltmusik musicians from different parts of the world to come together, understand each other and communicate meaningfully. Nada Brahma became something of a New Age bestseller in Germany and it prompted an extended critical response from musicologists like
Wilson as well as from the philosopher Peter Sloterdijk. In his book, *Kopernikanische Mobilmachung und ptolemäische Abrüstung* ([Copernican Mobilisation and Ptolemaic Disarmament] (1987)), Sloterdijk first examines the breakdown and pathologies of modernism as an aesthetic strategy, as well as the redundancy of the ideology of progress at its heart. Clearly interested in difference and ‘reality in the sense of non-anticipatable alterity’, Sloterdijk considers his own book ‘one voice in the noise of postmodernism’. It posits a disintegration of the apparent triad of the true, the beautiful and the good occurring at the birth of modernity, and identifies three approaches to re-synthesizing this triad in the modern era: a positivistic-scientistic, a political-ethical and an aesthetic approach (i.e., aesthetic modernism), each of them taking one part of the triad as its main focus but also attempting to incorporate the others. For Sloterdijk, postmodernism is the logical extension of the Copernican turn - it involves imagining the world anew when the assumed certainties of one’s ‘self-explanatory’, ‘Ptolemaic’ observations cannot be sustained.

Modernist aesthetics already involved a ‘war on the self-explanatory’, but were exclusive, whereas postmodern aesthetics, which themselves have ‘Ptolemaic’ tendencies, can involve a ‘second reflexion’ about the still-dominant modernism and are post-exclusive. Questioning modernism’s taboo on consonance in music is not necessarily an aesthetic restoration, but perhaps rather an application and extension of the same principle that modernism itself applied to the aesthetic tradition that preceded it.

Having made these general observations, Sloterdijk then goes to some length to analyse Berendt’s totalizing ‘neo-synthetic’ project in *Nada Brahma*, which eclectically assembles its disparate source materials not in a documentary fashion, but rather - just like *Weltmusik* itself - in order to impose an order onto chaos and to reconcile the ‘unhappy consciousness of modernity’. According to Sloterdijk, specialization characterizes the ‘intellectual ecology of modernity’ and neo-synthetic thought like Berendt’s has populated a field where traditional, professional philosophy has retreated from making large claims. Berendt asserts an answer to the question about the metaphysical substance of the world: the world is sound/tone! However, this ‘Ptolemaic’ grand theory - which Sloterdijk variously calls ‘music-ontological prophesy’, a ‘new metaphysical myth [that interrupts the] Copernican explosion’, and ‘a cognitive postmodernism’ - is inimical to subjectivity, and ultimately serves to exemplify a false approach to the notion of inquiry.

For Sloterdijk:

> The world is not sound/tone, but rather the space in which it is possible; it is not a symphony, but rather a noisy nightmare, which has cause to remind itself that the vision of tonal order can rise up out of the surfeit of noise.

Following both Sloterdijk’s and Wolfgang Welsch’s theoretical approaches, Peter Niklas Wilson likewise considered Berendt’s New Age music discourse part of a longing for wholeness and ‘a symptom of the inability to cope with complexity’; it was also dogmatic and repressive of individual dissonance. Importantly, both Wilson’s and Sloterdijk’s critique also cast one worried eye back on the totalising fascist ideology of the National Socialist past. Whereas Berendt had been eager to distance his *Weltmusik* utopia from National Socialist ideology, critics of *Weltmusik* attempted to reveal the common basis of the two. Sloterdijk spoke of a ‘thousand year Reich of
the key tones” and observed: “The answer which the great rule of harmony provides to my little dissonant questions must always be: You yourself are the problem. And what it means to “solve” this problem: historically there are almost only examples which make one shiver”.

Critics versed in postcolonial theory also rightly considered that western musicians’ search for universal ‘archetypes’ within themselves promoted the treatment of cultural difference in a superficial and exoticist manner, failing to take the ‘Other’ and its specific context seriously. The notion of correctly hearing ‘Other’ harmonic systems so that they conformed with the western harmonic system was criticised as arrogantly universalising the western self. The charge of exoticism was rounded out by the claim that West German Weltmusik musicians and theorists were failing to engage with the music of the ‘exotics’ actually living in Germany, namely the Gastarbeiter (‘guest workers’). Indeed, the 1960s-1980s celebrations of Weltmusik are strangely silent about the musical activities of the Gastarbeiter and other ‘Others’ resident in Germany. Weltmusik was rather something that western musicians did, or that selected ‘Other’ musicians were invited to Germany to participate in. This fact gives the German debates a degree of abstraction. Finally, critics objected to the way in which Berendt moralistically sought to avoid criticism from ‘purist’ opponents of Weltmusik by labelling them latently fascist, when all they were insisting on was the difference between (musical) cultures.

German debates about Weltmusik reveal the difficulty of fixing ideological or political meaning to music, either in the modern or the postmodern era. I take the view that the opposing discourses of Weltmusik are (as Bennett puts it in his analysis of the ‘anxious’ and ‘celebratory’ Anglophone narratives of world music) ‘not just two contradictory ways of describing the same phenomenon. [They] are complementary as much as contradictory.’ The western music industry surely banks on both cultural difference (marketed as ‘ethnic authenticity’) and on comforting images of intercultural ‘fusion’, which can mollify the conscience of those who are all-too-aware of past cultural chauvinism, while obscuring critical readings of history. In his rush to establish the utopian value of music and of Weltmusik in particular, Berendt tended to downplay or disregard such questions. His account of the collegial dissemination of music throughout the world, divorced from questions of power, was too sanguine and his ad hominem attack on supposedly latently fascist Weltmusik opponents was overstated (though perhaps understandable given his first-hand experience of National Socialism). However, his critics’ charges of neo-colonialism are also too undifferentiated, tending to assume that postcolonial partners in an intercultural musical encounter should only practice the ‘authentic’ and are ‘completely immature and fall prey to any European who turns up’. For all its failings, Berendt’s discourse drew attention to some of these weak points. Detailed qualitative studies of the Weltmusik summits and the Jazz Meets the World Series indicate that, far from being victims, some of the postcolonial musicians involved were able to turn the situation to their advantage. In 1966, the Indonesian Allstars, whom Berendt had met during an earlier trip to South East Asia, contacted the critic and cannily manipulated his ego and sense of obligation to assist them in mounting a tour of Europe, despite his misgivings about whether there would be an audience for their music. Salah El Mahdi, a musicologist and the composer of the Tunisian national anthem, considered the various Jazz and Tunisian music ‘meetings’ on which he and George Gruntz collaborated to be an excellent platform from which to promote Tunisian music to European audiences.

To
his credit, Berendt initiated the debate about *Weltmusik* in Germany; it is clear that he sought to provoke a response, just as he had done earlier with his jazz proselytising, and that, in his way, he wished to contribute to a rejection of nationalism and a cosmopolitisation of German culture.\(^{111}\) He shared this aim with other German thinkers of the era, even as they rejected his mystical, universalising approach.

Recourse by postwar West Germans to world musics - like the earlier recourse to jazz - was partly about curiosity in relation to new musical experiences in a globalising world, a world in which wealthy West German consumers, tourists and musicians were increasingly being exposed to the exotic ‘Other’. If, in this respect, the German interest was not dissimilar to interest in world beat and world music elsewhere in the western world, it was also partly a strategy to avoid vexed issues arising from the ideological occupation of indigenous German forms of music and to identify with something thought to transcend a tainted ‘Germanness’.\(^{112}\) For Berendt, utopian *Weltmusik* discourse was not only a way of formulating a modernist cultural criticism; it was also about overcoming, and making symbolic amends for, the ills of past German nationalism. In a complicated way, *Weltmusik* was therefore about both remembering and forgetting the past. In the 1980s the issue of remembering and forgetting was - as it remains today - highly charged territory in Germany, and it helps explain the heated polemics for and against *Weltmusik*, which were shaped in important ways not only by broader modernist and postmodernist cultural perspectives, but also by the shadow of Auschwitz.

NOTES


18. George L. Mosse, The Nationalization of the Masses; Political Symbolism and Mass Movements in Germany from the Napoleonic Wars through the Third Reich, New York, H. Fertig, 1975, p159; Michael Kater, 'Jazz as Dissidence in the Third Reich', in T. Mäusli (ed) Jazz und Sozialgeschichte, Zurich, CHRONOS Verlag, 1994, pp71-72, 76.


23. See Berendt, Der Jazz, op. cit., p89.


30. Unless otherwise noted, the sources for this account of Berendt’s biography are: Berendt, *Das Leben*, op. cit; Michael Rüsenberg, *Der Sohn des Pfarrers, der Papst wurde. Joachim Ernst Berendt zum 80. Geburtstag*, Hessain Radio broadcast ts., Frankfurt, 19 July 2002; the periodicals *Jazz Podium* and *Jazz Echo*; and the Berendt Papers housed at the *Jazzinstitut*, Darmstadt.

31. The *Jazzbuch* has been published between 1953 and 2005 in seven German editions, translated into eleven languages and sold in excess of 1.3 million copies.


34. Berendt, *Der Jazz*, op. cit., p35.


42. Berendt, *Der Jazz*, op. cit., pp45-47.


49. These activities were also captured on record. They were released as Pedro Iturralde Quintet and Paco
de Lucia’s *Flamenco Jazz* (1967), Tony Scott and the Indonesian Allstars’ *Djanger Bali* (1967), and Various Musicians’ *Jazz Meets India* (1967). However, Berendt was also involved as producer in countless other Weltmusik activities from the 1960s until the 1980s. See Hurley, *Jazz Meets the World*, op. cit.

50. This event was also recorded as Various Musicians, *To Hear the World in a Grain of Sand* (1985).

51. Unless otherwise noted, this account of Berendt’s Weltmusik theory is largely drawn from his 1985 article ‘Über Weltmusik’, op. cit.


54. Ibid., p174.


64. Ibid., p24.


67. Ibid., p3.

68. More recent detailed research into world musics has also stressed the fundamental impurity of those musics. See Simon Frith, ‘The Discourse of World Music’, in *Western Music and its Others*, op. cit., p311.


76. See Peter Brooker, *Modernism/Postmodernism*, op. cit., p163.

77. Berendt, *Der Jazz*, op. cit.


87. Voswinkel, op. cit.; Wilson, ‘Zwischen Ethno-Pop’, p8; Peter N. Wilson, ‘Die Ratio des Irrationalismus’, in E. Jost (ed), *Die Musik der achtziger Jahre*, Mainz, B. Schott’s Söhne, 1990, p76. Berendt’s discourse on this point was simplified by his desire to maintain a distinction between art-jazz and popular music: he observes that there is commercialised popular music in Asia, which does reduce cultural differences. However, he differentiates this from (art-jazz) *Weltmusik*. Having thus excised jazz/*Weltmusik*, he then asserts that Asian popular music was not all bad - there was some Indian film music of a relatively high quality, for example see Berendt, ‘Über Weltmusik’, op. cit., p12. This argument sidestepped the economic argument, however.


94. Ibid., pp30-34.

95. Ibid., p58.

96. Ibid., p62, p69.

97. Ibid., p88, p94.

98. Ibid., p89.


100. Ibid., p114.


103. Ibid., p101. See also Wilson’s reference to the antisemitic remarks of the New Age publicist Rainer Holbe, Wilson, ‘Die Ratio’, op. cit., p68. Whilst Lyotard had also raised a similar point about the terror involved in maintaining the illusion of unity, the German writers tended to spell out the link to National Socialism, see Lyotard, ‘Answering the question’, op. cit., p150.


108. In fairness, the late Peter Niklas Wilson also presented a more differentiated picture in his last contribution to the Weltmusik debate. See Wilson, ‘Fluchthelfer’, op. cit.


110. See Hurley, Jazz Meets the World, op. cit.

111. See Berendt, Das Leben, op. cit., p314.