

## Abstracts

*Arne Stollberg*

### **Pleasures of Fear. The Uncanny and its Music**

Closely linked to the phenomenon of the uncanny is that of the desire for fear: Why do we find pleasure in a feeling that actually has little pleasurable about it? Psychoanalytic theory (Michael Balint) offers the explanation that the experience of fear paradoxically reactivates an early childhood belief in omnipotence and leads the subject into the ecstasy of a dissolution of the ego, which is perceived as erotic. This is precisely what can be connected with music as an incorporeal substance in which the human being is able to immerse himself, as it were. The essay traces this figure of thought with reference to Friedrich Nietzsche, Sigmund Freud, Hans-Thies Lehmann, Michael Balint and Helmuth Plessner, and finally analyses a scene from the first act of Wagner's *Siegfried* – Mime's attempt to convey the feeling of fear to Siegfried – as an »uncanny anticipation« of the psychoanalytical view.

*Stefan Willer*

### **Repetition and Recognition. On the Musically Uncanny in Tales**

**by Ludwig Tieck, Clemens Brentano, and E. T. A. Hoffmann**

Musical repetitions can be uncanny, not only as isolated effects but also as structural phenomena. This correlates with Sigmund Freud's influential theory that the uncanny arises rather from encounters with the familiar than from the completely unknown. The essay demonstrates how musical repetition is linked to the motif of the uncanny return in three narratives of German Romanticism. Ludwig Tieck's *Der blonde Eckbert* (1797) is a recursive story of reappearing similarities in which a repeatedly chanted song plays an important role. The narrative arrangement in Clemens Brentano's *Der Sänger* (1801), likewise provided with lyrical interludes, suggests the recurrence of a fateful genealogical prehistory. Finally, in E. T. A. Hoffmann's *Die Fermate* (1815), musical and narrative repetitions, further complicated by visual and pictorial reappearances, create a structural uncanniness that challenges the story's serene tone.

*Jean-François Candoni*

### **Music in the French Gothic Literature of the 19th Century**

In the 1830s, the French cultural scene experienced an unprecedented enthusiasm for so-called fantastic literature and especially for the literary work of E. T. A. Hoffmann. This fondness for a world perceived as strange and fascinating was reflected in a wave of publications of fantastic stories that were obviously mod-

elled on E. T. A. Hoffmann's tales. The authors included both well-known writers (Alexandre Dumas, Théophile Gautier, George Sand) and lesser-known literary figures (Raymond Brucker, Samuel-Henry Berthoud, Frédéric Mab). Most of the stories focus on the supernatural power of musical art. Indeed, under Hoffmann's influence, music is perceived as an exogenous element that defies rationality and can trigger feelings of exhilaration as well as feelings of terror and the uncanny. Even if the literary value of these narratives varies, they nevertheless represent an important stage in the productive reception of German literary and musical Romanticism in the French-speaking cultural area.

*Marco Frenschkowski*

**Harmony of the Spheres and Madness. An Essay on Music and the Anglo-American Uncanny Fantastic Literature**

In literatures of the fantastic and the uncanny, music serves as an evocation of what is difficult or impossible to say in words. Paradoxically, this is done in descriptions, in language: that is, not by music itself. Using examples from E. A. Poe, Helena Blavatsky, M. P. Shiel, L. T. C. Rolt and H. P. Lovecraft, this study analyses how music (and also silence) can become not only the subject but also a kind of gateway of manifestations of the uncanny. It becomes apparent that the old idea of a harmony of the spheres, of an otherworldly music, can be transformed fantastically: it awakens ecstasy and madness, and can even (H. P. Lovecraft) be used to evoke an encounter with some ultimate cosmic strangeness.

*Martin Küster*

**Impassible – Impossible: The Meaning of Eerily Monotonic Song around 1800**

The late 18th and early 19th century practice of setting the words of oracles and ghosts (*ombra*) in a starkly monotonic, anti-melodic style, familiar from works such as Gluck's *Alceste*, Mozart's *Don Giovanni* or Weber's *Der Freischütz*, is still barely explained. In this article, I point out the shortcomings of the standard topic-theory claim that monotony is meant to invoke the supernatural by means of a reference to church liturgy. Instead, drawing on contemporaneous statements by Gluck and others, I argue that the intended and effective mechanism is not topological but intuitive, expressive and empathetic: in a context where melodic motion is widely understood to correlate with passionate expression, melodic stasis functions as the expression of impassivity or lifelessness – the natural condition of statues and misty apparitions. On this basis, I investigate the theorist August Apel's notion that the horror induced by monotonic song derives ultimately from a confrontation of the subject with an intuitive impos-

sibility: an entity which is devoid of the most primitive aspects of life and yet speaks intelligibly.

*Friederike Wißmann*

**Eerie Idylls. Franz Schubert's *Der Geistertanz***

The eerie in music can be identified through compositional strategies and different musical parameters that reveal concepts of the eerie as a distinct aesthetic form. While in opera as a multimedia art form, the uncanny, and especially the terrible, can be experienced not only through music and words, but also through the scenic and dramatic dimensions, songs like Schubert's *Geistertanz* draw their potential rather from an intimacy of expression. In contrast to genres like film or opera, eerie songs make us fear through the music and the lyrics in a silent manner. Nevertheless, we do find contrasting scenarios and different narratives between lyrics and the musical structure. Eerie songs are ambivalent in the sense that they invoke an intimate situation like no other genre, and it is precisely the intimacy of the performance (including the idea of a domestic idyll) that contradicts the musical and lyrical characteristics of the eerie. The opposition of the intimacy of the performance and the eerie song, of idyll and unfamiliarity, creates an area of tension which is characteristic for songs like *Der Geistertanz*.

*Julian Caskel*

**Silence and Spook. The Semiotics of the Uncanny  
Using the Example of Symphonic Scherzo Movements**

E. T. A. Hoffmann famously describes a specific spot in the third movement of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony as an apparition of the musical uncanny. From this starting point, possible preconditions for similar uncanny moments in scherzo movements are discussed on a theoretical level (through theories of the comic and the sublime of the early 19th century), by means of systematic evaluation of a standard text (i. e., Hermann Kretzschmar's *Führer durch den Concertsaal*) and contemporary reviews, and with analytical observations that include among others further examples by Beethoven (scherzo of the »Eroica«) and Mahler (scherzo of the Seventh Symphony). Finally, a semiotic theory of uncanny appearances is compared to empirical research that discusses musical chills and frissons.

*Ivana Rentsch*

**The Uncanny as a Space for Experimentation:  
Antonín Dvořák's Symphonic Poems**

Antonín Dvořák's evident »passion for the horrific, the unnatural and the ghostly« (Eduard Hanslick) in the 1890s is the focus of this article. Thus, everything

revolves around a single question: Why? It should be noted that the preference for the uncanny can certainly be seen in an aesthetic line to the preceding works, which runs through the nine symphonies to the folkloristic compositions. The unifying factor lies not least in the reception mechanisms of extra-musical attribution. In order to shed light on this phenomenon and its fundamental significance for Dvořák's oeuvre, we will take a look at the – according to Hanslick »ghastly« – material of the symphonic poems as well as an excursus on Dvořák's folkloristic compositions. In the mirror of the techniques exposed there, the uncanniness of the symphonic poems appears as the culmination of years of compositional development.

**Frank Hentschel**

**The Pleasure of Fear in the Music Theatre of the 17th Century**

In 1974, Richard Alewyn argued that the pleasure of fear, especially represented by uncanny subjects, be an aesthetical post-enlightenment phenomenon. To evaluate this thesis, it is necessary to investigate pre-enlightenment artefacts. The present article, therefore, focuses on music theatre from the 17th century searching for clues to the pleasure of fear and the uncanny in such works. Investigating examples from the Intermedio *La Pellegrina*, Cavalieri's *Rappresentazione di Anima, et di Corpo*, Monteverdi's *Ballo delle Ingrate*, Lully's *Belléophon* and *Alceste*, Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, and Charpentier's *Médée* as well as contemporaneous descriptions of the performances, the article concludes that pre-enlightenment art did imply the pleasure of fear and possibly the uncanny. However, in contrast to post-enlightenment art, three observations could be made: 1) usually, the horrible agents in 17th century music theatre does not occur of its own accord but is intentionally being evoked by human agents; 2) the horrible is usually not the subject as such but comes into play as part of a love drama or the like; 3) 17th century music theatre does not thematize the disturbance of a natural order; rather, the monsters just belong to the fictional reality.

**Bernhard Jahn**

**The Emergence of the Uncanny in 18th Century Music Theatre.  
Religious Traditions and Comic Practice**

This article examines forms of the uncanny in 18th century music theatre. The starting point of the considerations is the assumption that Metastasio's music theatre, as enlightened theatre, can do without the category of the uncanny, so that the uncanny must be newly established as an aesthetic category of effect in the second half of the 18th century, parallel to its career in narrative literature (*gothic novel*). Musically, this category was tested in the first half of the 18th century,

first in the church cantata (Telemann) and the oratorio (Handel), then in the comic music theatre (Opéra comique, Singspiel). Even in Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, this tension between comedy and the uncanny remains tangible.

*Anna Ricke*

**»[M]uch too terrible for representation«. Music and Sound in Matthew Lewis's Melodrama *The Captive* (1803)**

When Matthew Lewis's melodrama *The Captive* premiered in 1803, the audience reacted emotionally, fainting and screaming, thus leading the author to withdraw his play. Combining elements of both German melodrama (in the style of Georg Benda) and emerging boulevard melodrama, the music depicted the feelings of the protagonist and accompanied the pantomimic elements of the play, while an uncanny »prison soundscape,« including sounds of bars, chains and cries of other captives, lent a sense of realism. This paper analyzes the use of music and sound in Lewis's play, contextualizing it within melodrama and Gothic traditions. It argues that it was not only the play's subject – a woman imprisoned in a »madhouse« by her tyrant husband – but also its music and sound which contributed significantly to the effect on the audience, thereby demonstrating both the relevance and potential of studies on music and sound in Gothic plays.

*Tobias Robert Klein*

**The Unbearable Finitude of Being. Three Fragments from Heinrich Marschner's *Vampyr***

This music-dramaturgical analysis of three representations of the »uncanny« in Heinrich Marschner's opera *Der Vampyr* relates the conscious and unconscious reflection of social changes and contingencies with the persistence of peculiar genre traditions (rather than looking at it as a mere predecessor of Wagnerian innovations). The ballad of Emmy Perth, which displays fear and dark apprehensions by borrowing from performative strategies of traditional storytelling, is placed in the context of the French operatic romance (Boieldieu, *La Dame blanche*), while the »Great Scene« of Ruthwen and Aubrey is described as a musical portrayal of conflicting drives and forces converging in the (literary) motive of the »gothic double«. Finally, the demise of the eponymous bloodsucker, who fails to honour a compulsory »deadline«, is contextualized with reference to Joseph Weigl's incidental music for a dramatic adaptation of Christian Heinrich Spieß's widely read ghost story *Das Petermännchen*.

*Christian Kämpf*

**Freed from a Spell. Schumann's *Manfred***

The Schumann criticism, in which the critique of musical romanticism condensed, was primarily aimed at Schumann's large-scale vocal-instrumental works such as *Peri* or *Genoveva*. However, *Manfred* was qualified as a modern work of art in the musical discourse of the 1850s and 1860s and exempted from criticism of Schumann. This is remarkable. Starting from the subjectivism verdict against Schumann, the essay refers to the special function of the imagination, which mediates between the objective outside world and the subjective inner world in the aesthetic thinking of Jean Paul, E.T.A. Hoffmann and Schumann. The uncanny in art serves as a means to an end because it stimulates the imagination in a special way. But stage tricks and bang effects stand in the way of this. Schumann therefore planned his *Manfred* adaptation for the theatre stage, but did not want a complete materialization of all the ghosts and wonders that the material has to offer. This adaptation of Byron's *Manfred* was even liked by the critics from the New German School, as the essay shows.

*Richard Erkens*

**Uncanny Moments. Localization of Anxiety Scenarios in 19th Century French and Italian Music Theatre**

Localizing the uncanny in French and Italian operas requires preliminary considerations: The translational problem of the lack of a conceptual equivalent of the uncanny in these (libretto) languages leads to the necessity of a definition suitable for music theatre, to which persons, sudden appearances, or situations the uncanny adheres and can thus be perceived as such. With reference to Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytical understanding of 1919, a scene typology is developed that first systematically locates those uncanny moments that are designed as music-dramaturgical anxiety scenarios. It becomes understandable that uncanny experience in music theatre has different potential effects and is dependent on theatrical communication. Who experiences such a moment of anxiety? Is it only some stage characters, only the audience or the intra- as well as extradiegetic level together? This prospective is applied to relevant opera scenes of different genres by Soliva, Boieldieu, Rossini, Bellini, Meyerbeer, Verdi and Offenbach.

*Janina Müller*

**Chronotopic Sound Spaces. On the Sounding Architectures of the Uncanny in Roman Polański's Apartment Trilogy**

This paper examines the role of music and sound in spatio-temporal constructions of the uncanny in Roman Polański's ›apartment trilogy,‹ comprising *Repul-*

sion (1965), *Rosemary's Baby* (1968), and *The Tenant* (1976). All three soundtracks foreground environmental noises to create distinct acoustic atmospheres of »unhomeliness« and feature ominously recurring fragments of piano music and exercises that are placed in the off-screen realm. To elucidate how space and time are rendered uncanny, I discuss the use of acousmatic sound in relation to Franz Kafka's short story *The Burrow*. Furthermore, I draw out similarities between Polański's apartment buildings and the chronotope of the Gothic castle as developed by Mikhail Bakhtin. As I argue, the haunting piano music imbues the spaces with a sense of malign agency and memory, thus participating in the psychological narratives of repressed trauma, exile, and displacement.

### ***Christoph Hust***

#### **The Unheard Sounds of the Uncanny in Interactive Fiction**

This article explores the use of sound and music in Interactive Fiction (IF) to create an atmosphere of uncanniness and horror. It provides a historical overview of multimedia technologies and their development, highlighting advancements in sound chips and sampling technology that opened up new possibilities for IF authors. The role of sound and music in IF is then discussed, with a focus on Howard Phillips Lovecraft's influence on the genre. Through case studies of popular IF games, including *Adventure*, *Haunt*, *Zork*, *The Lurking Horror*, *Anchorhead* and *The King of Shreds and Patches*, the article examines diverse influences ranging from Tolkien to tabletop role-playing systems like *Dungeons & Dragons* and *Call of Cthulhu*. The article argues that descriptions of sound and music can be essential components for creating an atmosphere of horror and the uncanny in IF, where the textual nature of the medium poses unique challenges for the depiction of terrifying situations and soundscapes.

### ***Carsten Göpfert***

#### **Uncanny Video Game Music in First Person. The Use of Auditive**

#### **Stimulus in the Horror Games *Slender – The Eight Pages* and *Layers of Fear***

Whenever music is part of a multimedial experience, it takes a key role in amplifying and creating effect and emotion. Video games in First Person and their highly immersive nature arguably serve as most intense experiences for players and thus any horror created within gets as close to the player as possible. This essay explores and describes the ways in which music is used to intensify uncanny and horrific atmospheres and situations or how it even initiates them in the games *Slender – The Eight Pages* and *Layers of Fear*. It considers diegetic and non-diegetic sound as well as creation and depletion of suspense throughout a complete game and shows how the games react to the actions of the player. After analysing the

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games singularly, the essay compares both sound designs and suggests that the use of music depends on the exact gameplay of a game and therefore differs even within the same genre.