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A VIEW FROM THE SOUTH II

Irregular Canons on the Canon

Recent investigations into what has been called the musical canon on the part of the followers of the New Musicology would not have been possible without all the exemplary work of Michel Foucault¹. Its principal objective was to provide a critical vision of the way in which the knowledge and practice of modern social sciences controlled and disciplined societies through the establishment of canons of “normality”. Foucault dissected, by means of his archaeologies of knowledge and discourse, the historicity of these values, the attempt to build a political order on concepts based on a “scientific knowledge” of human nature, profoundly wrong and unstable. These human sciences made man into an object of study and of regulation of the State. By means of its organisms, schools, hospitals, prisons, they subjected us to what was claimed to be our being, making us divided beings, taking health, mental health and conformity with custom as our true self, repudiating

¹ Cf.....Need to add a proper note here

our illnesses, our irrationalities, our delinquencies. Foucault was at the centre of the anti-humanist polemic of the 1960s and 1970s, in that he claimed that Man was a concept that did not, historically, come from the Enlightenment. Foucault's unit of analysis is discourse. It is in discourse that Foucault seeks the necessary pre-conditions for knowledge to function, the dark side that sustains them. He insists that "only historical contents allow us to discover the effects of rupture in the conflicts and struggles that the order imposed by functionalist or systematic functioning tries to hide"² His method is a multiplicity of generic investigations that can only be carried out "if the tyranny of globalizing arguments, with their hierarchies and all the privileges of a theoretical avant-garde, is eliminated"³. It is an attempt to emancipate historical knowledge from this subjection, to make them capable of opposition and fighting against the co-action of a theoretical discourse, unitary, formal and scientific. It tries to reactivate local discourses, the "lesser" knowledge. Foucault states that when a discourse claims to be scientific, what it is important to

² Foucault, Michel (1976), "A lecture", *Art in Theory 1900-1990*, ed. Harrison, Charles and Wood, Paul (1992), Oxford, Blackwell

³ *Idem*, p.973

verify is what type of knowledge it is at the same time attempting to disqualify. His enormous legacy, even in its incompleteness, has given rise to many continuations in various areas which he did not research, and, of course, a good deal of criticism.

In the same way, studies on the musical canon also seek to undermine the givens of our musical life; to investigate historically its emergence in the various aspects of its formation: the pedagogical, the scholastic, the ideological and finally its constitution into a repertoire accepted as a basis of musical life.

I shall, therefore, launch into a series of irregular canons on the Canon, doubtless running the risk of bringing together the useless and the disagreeable. Useless because we may be overtaken by a kind of paralysis in the face of a social functioning that seems regulated from on high and omnipresent, designated by Foucault as Power, in the face of which it is not possible to imagine an escape. This aspect of the problem, the asphyxia which the omnipresence of Foucaultian power provokes, is perhaps one of the best-founded criticisms that are made of it; because whatever the mechanisms of

power, it is necessary to find ways of escape, otherwise archaeology serves no purpose. Disagreeable because to question the sweet comfort on which our refined musical pleasure is based may make us touch the *fauteuil d'orchestre*. In spite of this, and as I believe that we are in a phase of **transition of paradigms**, of the emergence of other values (or, in other words, things are changing, but we do not know how), I shall go ahead nonetheless.

The question of the internationalization of Portuguese culture has been a recurrent theme amongst pragmatic topics discussed by recent governments. This objective arises just as it is, with no discussion of the problem, without explaining why this is a difficulty, as posited by governmental means. For the most part, this objective remains simply amongst the government's proposals, and is never actually put into practice. Other, higher (?) values are pushed forward. But it does not seem to me that this is the only problem. Analysis should first be made of the criteria that make other cultures into hegemonies, something everyone knows more or less empirically, but much less is known of, and discussion is much less concerning, the internal working

of cultural hegemonies and their mechanisms of self-defence.

It is obvious that Portuguese culture is peripheral, as is the country. It could hardly be otherwise. For this reason it remained apart, during the 19th and 20th centuries, from the constitution of cultural canons meanwhile being formed in the centres of Western culture. It is a process, in other words, something dynamic, with some relatively fixed pillars and others mutable. Thus, the centre of the artistic and literary canon moved, during the 20th century, from Paris to New York, as real and symbolic places of consecration. But, beyond these main centres, one may say that there exists an imaginary headquarters of the Western cultural canon, and when we speak of the internationalization of Portuguese culture we speak of attempts to penetrate these centres and this headquarters in various ways. In cinema, for example, there have been successful attempts to show Portuguese films in European film festivals (three or four), to win a prize or two, to earn some notice in the newspapers of these countries, which is in many cases fully justified given the persecutory stupidity of

many Portuguese film critics. But the greatest amount of attention is, without a doubt, necessary in order to avoid the inverse provinciality expressed in maxims such as “it was successful in Paris, so it’s good”. What is at stake is not whether it is good or not, something it is never easy to establish without discussion, but in both cases there is no critical reflection on the state of the canon, on its state at the moment, much less on its formation as such.

We should analyse concert repertoire, the existence of published scores and the presence of discs in shops. In comparison with literary output, in the 1970s one could walk into a bookshop in Paris or London and it would be very rare to find a translation of a Portuguese work. With luck one might find something by Eça de Queiroz, and, from a certain point onwards, Pessoa. In 1998, in the same bookshops in Paris, apart from the particular case of Fernando Pessoa, almost all of whose work is translated, there are Saramago, Lobo Antunes and quite a few others. I believe this to be the result of various factors: of a discovery by a scholar, the interest of a publisher, a correct institutional persistence from the Portuguese side, of the real merit of the writers, a

confluence which resulted in what was the discovery of a literature. But in London, and even more in New York or San Francisco, the presence of Portuguese authors in bookshops has diminished considerably if we compare the situation with France. The same is true in cinema.

If the international literary canon has become open to “secondary” languages, Spanish, Portuguese, writers of peripheral or exotic provenance (Latin America first, then India, Africa and China), this is partially a result of the creative emptying of a good part of European literature and of the splendour of writers in languages hitherto deemed lesser from the point of view of the literary canon. There was Cervantes, there was Camões, but afterwards...

The musical canon is not at all on the same level. One may isolate two, one principal and one secondary, contemporary. The “classical” canon is what has been established for more time, naturally, and the small modifications within it are relatively few in number. The “entrances” of Vivaldi in about 1900 and of Mahler in the 1960s are the most obvious cases. The greater part of the classical canon is based on the Germanic-Viennese

tradition from Bach to Wagner and Brahms, and includes, in the operatic domain, Verdi and some other Italians. Why do Maria João Pires and Sequeira Costa not play Portuguese music? The reply is simple: because there is not one Portuguese composer, not one Portuguese work, which is part of the classical canon! The fact of belonging to the catalogue of international recording companies, the case of Maria João Pires, would render any such attempt, should it exist, fruitless. Not even the example of Marcos Portugal's opera *La confusione della somiglianza*, premièred in Florence and performed in Dresden, Milan, Vienna, Berlin, Hamburg and London, alters this fact, in spite of its more than one hundred performances in Europe between 1700 and 1800; rather, it confirms it, because at this point historically, the canon was not yet operative as a regulating concept in musical life and its formation, as I said, occurred within German musical culture.

The appearance of the so-called new early music, an interest of musicians and musicologists in music from before the classical canon, had a great impact in the last decades of the 20th century, and constituted, in a way, an

alternative canon. But the destiny of Portuguese works was not much different. Some works by the polyphonists of the 16th and 17th centuries were indeed recorded by groups such as the William Byrd Choir, but with the powerful influence and finance of the Gulbenkian Foundation which, in this respect as in so many others, replaced that of the non-functioning State. Otherwise these works would still be awaiting recording, as they continue outside the programmes of the alternative canon, even after they have been recorded, except in special, usually celebratory circumstances.

A canon is not altered by decree. In that it is an ideology that regulates and governs musical programming in the West, it moves with the slowness and weight of the transformation of ideas, almost imperceptibly, encountering resistance to change from the centres from which it radiates, the agents and their daily practice of buying and selling of concerts and artists, from programmers, from orchestral and theatrical conductors.

The contemporary canon displays some small differences overall, though it works in the same way.

Pierre Boulez confirms this in the debate with Foucault in 1983: “Contemporary music does not escape from this. Even if the attendance numbers are proportionally smaller, it does not escape from the defects of musical society in general: it has its places, its *rendez-vous*, its stars, its snobberies, its rivalries, its exclusives; like the other society, it has its values on the stock exchange, its prices, its statistics”⁴.

Nevertheless, Boulez, as a conductor, was himself a decisive figure in the construction of the contemporary canon. He established his own private genealogy as a composer, the group of works he considered decisive for himself and for his vision of musical language. Later, a successful conductor belonging to the small group of those who have contracts with multinationals, he recorded for Erato, re-recorded for Deutsche Grammophon, his private canon. His influence was very important, as great as his lucidity, but it was not the only motor behind this creation. Most of the works written after 1950 never entered into the classical canon, in spite of appearing now and again, usually resulting from the

⁴ In Foucault, *Dits et Ecrits*, vol. IV, Paris, Gallimard, p. 489.

desire of a titular conductor (Abbado conducts Nono or Kurtág) or from the interest of a performer (Pollini plays Boulez) or from a multicultural event, which includes and justifies it. In the context of this difficulty – of the integration of music composed after 1950 into the repertoire – a network of festivals of contemporary music had gradually established itself: Darmstadt, Royan, Donaueschingen, Metz, the Holland Festival, etc. This number is today relatively large, the internal order of this canon is apparently more dispersed; one notes here and there an aesthetic conflict of tastes and predilections on the part of the programmers, but, as we have seen, it works in exactly the same way as the classical canon.

In Europe, the main countries of this subcanon are clearly France, Germany and, perhaps, northern Italy. The individual integration of composers who come from peripheral countries occurs obligatorily by means of physical presence, emigration to the central countries. Thus we have Xenakis in Paris, the Hungarian Ligeti and the Argentinian Kagel in Germany. At the end of the 1970s, beginning of the 1980s, the accelerated creative exhaustion of the central dominant trend caused the

phenomenon of late discoveries, of the “forgotten ones of the 20th century”. Pierre Boulez commissioned a work from Kurtág, *Les Messages de feu Madamemoiselle R.V. Trousova*, Tristan Murail discovered Giacinto Scelsi, Ligeti discovered Conlon Nancarrow. In this way, these three composers, now at an advanced age, came to be part of the regular repertoires connected to the contemporary subcanon. During Gorbachov’s *Perestroika*, and, above all, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, Arvo Pärt, Alfred Schnittke, Sofia Gubaidulina, Galina Ustvolskaya and the Georgian Giya Kancheli came to appear relatively frequently in concert programmes and publishers’ catalogues.

These “discoveries” had a double function. On the one hand they present an openness to the outside, to the exotic, and are impelled in most cases by political events, as is obvious in these former Soviet cases. On the other hand, they help the invisible centre to continue as a centre. It is this that chooses, that includes what it subsequently irradiates. These composers do not move directly from their places of origin and life to the rest of the Western world. They are filtered, explained and

legitimized by the centre, which has a barely-disguised subconscious desire: to maintain its position as such.

The United Kingdom, which has always maintained a certain distance within Europe (who is the English composer of the 19th century?) and the United States, though, on the one hand, they have occupy a similar position to that of other centres as regards the acceptation of the classical canon, in the contemporary subcanon they act in a relatively independent fashion with regard to the European centre.

The case of Emmanuel Nunes is quite close to that of the Xenakian paradigm, though twenty or thirty years later. Having lived for more than thirty years in Paris and Baden-Baden, he became slowly and gradually part of the contemporary subcanon in the same way as the Greek Xenakis. In fact, both composers have recordings published in a collection entitled “Musique Française d’Aujourd’hui”. This aspect, which might be thought irrelevant, clearly shows their full integration and sharing in the values of the centre, rather than a provisory memorization of nationality. Even so, just as in the cases of early music mentioned above, the Gulbenkian

Foundation gives strong support to Nunes, both by financing recordings and by participating directly with its Orchestra or Choir in concerts and recordings of his larger works. Even more recently, and as an example of the strength of IRCAM as a focus of irradiation and legitimization, in addition to Nunes, we find music by the Finns Magnus Lindberg and Kaija Saariaho, the Englishmen George Benjamin and Jonathan Harvey and the Italian Ivan Fedele, who all have in common the use of electronics in real time, the great trademark of IRCAM, in the context of publications and recordings naturally dominated by the French.

With this explicable exception, what is going on with Portuguese music written by other composers? The one-off performance of a Portuguese work, a programme here and there, does not alter the general picture. Are there discs on sale outside Portugal? No. Are there scores published and consistently distributed? No, and, unfortunately, in this case, not even in Portugal after the illusory light of Musicoteca and its later disappearance, for all practical purposes. The only factor that has changed substantially in Portugal is the considerable

increase in the commissioning of new works, concomitant, moreover, with a renewal of international interest in premieres from 1980 onwards. This interest has many explanations, but one of them is certainly the change that occurred in the music itself, which I discuss in the essay “Questions of perception”.

It may therefore be said that the internationalization of Portuguese music does not exist. If that is a fact, it needs to be put in the correct context, in order not to come up against the usual lamentations. The objective of this text is actually to contribute to the end of the lamentations and to appeal for lucid action. The so-called internationalization would include partial integration into the classical and contemporary canon(s), something truly improbable if, as we have seen, these canons function with identifiable ideological and geographical criteria. Only dismantling this ideology and its apparatus could change anything, and I do not foresee this possibility in the near future. Taking this into account, it would be easier to dismantle the subservient fallacies that these mechanisms set in action.

I believe that the concept of cultural industry, as it was expressed by Adorno and Horkheimer in *Dialectics of Enlightenment* has, at least in part, been overtaken by reality. The decisive experience for the Germans had been the contact with the emergent mass cultural industry of the 1930s in America. Today I believe that the concept may be divided into two or more streams. For Adorno, Cultural Industry was completely negative as a key instrument of the domination of capitalist ideology. It included, in the realm of music, all popular and entertainment musics, and the “classical” sector which I have just defined as canonical: the group of works from the past regularly included in the concert programmes of orchestras and opera theatres. There are two factors which should be re-examined. The first is the appearance of pockets of resistance within mass culture, one of them having been the pop music of the 1960s, with very strong transforming elements, whether as mirror, or as the driving force of new social relations. The second aspect is the division between industrial mass culture and élite mass culture, deriving from the degeneration of the transforming potential of the

historical avant-gardes. As Baumann's text⁵ shows, modern and post-modern avant-gardes became big business, especially in the plastic arts. If the same could hardly be said of music, the new institutional framework of teaching in universities and polytechnics, on the one hand, and the emergence of a contemporary canonical field, certainly a minority, but endowed with great intellectual prestige from the symbolic and other standpoints (Boulez and *Répons* won Grammys). Justifying the support of cultural foundations and the State, places before us a huge area which it is possible to analyse. There are also multiple ambivalent factors in this regard.

It is interesting to note that there are works which are part both of the classical canon and the alternative canon. The *Passion according to St Matthew*, for example, may be performed in accordance with the "classical" performance canon, or with the alternative canon linked to the new early music, on period instruments, with clearer articulation, the voices and instruments using less vibrato, and so on. From the

⁵ Baumann, Kystof,

performance point of view, the stylistic confrontation between the two streams has reached some points of considerable tension. Bernard Haitink left his post with the Concertgebouw Orchestra because Nikolaus Harnoncourt conducted it so many times that Haitink could no longer obtain from the orchestra the same kind of legato that made his performances of Mahler and other romantic repertoire famous. The tendency in this confrontation has been towards a gradual conquest of ground on the part of what I have called the alternative canon, whether as concerns the repertoire in question, becoming larger and larger, or the number of concerts given by these conductors and performers, or the number of discs recorded and the constant appearance of new groups and new works dug out from under the dust where the values of the classical canon had buried them. In this sense, the two cultural industries, those of the masses and the élite, work in the same way. The term “alternative rock” designates products that initially seem to be those of resistance, but the industry is alert, and very often, when success arrives, contracts with large record companies are signed, specialist critics being left

orphaned of the refinement guaranteed by minority taste, and they set off once more in search of some other alternative rock. The struggle between “good taste” and “cheap taste” will never end. In this regard, what I call *élite* and mass cultural industries are empirical terms and problematic in application. The fields are in permanent movement and transformation, the *élite* is frequently uncultured or of a superficial journalistic culture, and is always ready to be taken in by fashions and their fascination. The masses, poor things, with their banal and tedious jobs, do not cultivate the metaphysical pleasures of cultural practices. But the world is surprising. Power, for Foucault, is the concrete power that each individual possesses, it being its partial or total cessation that permits the establishment of political power and sovereignty⁶. This is why, contrary to what Foucault might have thought, democracy is a reasonable system. It allows the masses, from time to time, with their “lesser” local knowledge, their great sum of small individual powers, to deal massive blows, unprotected by gloves, particularly to politicians with an excess of

⁶ Foucault, *idem* p.976

confidence in the “excellence of argument” and “maximum visibility”.

In the face of the neo-liberal onslaught, which defends the market – the cultural industry of the masses, in the last analysis – as the only regulating factor of cultural practices, the importance of the participation of the State and of foundations seems to me indispensable for regulation and for at least attenuating the ridiculous dominant economicist view. The neo-liberals seem only to like art if it earns money.

But this should not excuse us from analysing any perverse workings within the contemporary artistic subfield that, in placing artists in the limbo of social irrelevance, in the comfort of “art for art’s sake”, with support, turns them at times into arrogant provocateurs or conformists in disguise. The precarious but necessary balance in the face of this state of things involves an intransigent defence of minority arts but also reflection on that part of the artists on the *raison d’être* of their work, whether or not they are absorbed by the regulatory criteria of the canonical subfields. The social responsibility of artists does not necessarily mean

immediately political positions in the Brechtian sense, nor in the Adornian sense of critical work on artistic forms and materials. It is, then, extremely difficult, if not impossible, to devise a programme. Again according to Foucault, there are no great theories, great systems of truths ready to be used, but local and specific knowledge, open to contingencies, to rupture, to discontinuity.

I proposed to the Centro Cultural de Belém, when I was working as a consultant in 1997, a small Louis Andriessen cycle. When this was accepted and put in motion, I was able to see the international canon at work from close up. The Schoenberg Ensemble, a Dutch group of the highest quality, directed by Reinbert De Leeuw, often performs works by Andriessen and other Dutch composers in Holland. I had found it somewhat strange in 1990 that the group appeared at the Gulbenkian Foundation performing transcriptions by De Leeuw of works by Debussy and Schoenberg and, later, at the Festival dos Capuchos in a celebrated version of *Pierrot Lunaire* with Barbara Sukova. I wondered why they would play these programmes if here (in Holland) they perform much more recent music? I proposed that

they gave a programme based around Louis Andriessen. The highpoint of this process was when the programme proposal came with only one work by Andriessen, *Zilver*, the other being by Steve Reich, John Adams and Claude Vivier. The ensemble had recorded shortly beforehand a CD of works by Vivier, and the Americans were part of their regular programming. For the CCB, it was of course a good programme. But it did not seem much for Andriessen. But two concerts made up a reasonable cycle. It was clear that the international strategy of the Schoenberg Ensemble took precedence over the initial objective, that it took account above all of their own place in the circuit and some of the values of the subcanon.

The Netherlands, a country I know well, are a very interesting and symptomatic case. It is a central country from the performance point of view: it has one of the best orchestras in the world, that of the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, it was a main player at the beginning of the new early music with Gustav Leonhardt, Frans Bruggen, Anner Bylsma and many others, but in creative terms its musical culture has neither irradiating strength

nor the necessary conviction to break the rules of the centre. Quite the contrary: it submits itself completely. In this respect it functions as a peripheral country, as the case of the Schoenberg Ensemble shows. The only Dutch composer regularly performed internationally, Andriessen precisely, is performed and sought out as a teacher in England and the United States, but rarely in the central countries of the contemporary canon. There would thus have been an opportunity for two peripheral countries in creative terms, and two second cities, if they had organized themselves to make use of the coincident Cultural Capitals, to confront their respective peripheries. What happened with Oporto and Rotterdam Capitals of Culture was, then, a lost opportunity. The opera on Erasmus and Damião de Gois was the exception that proved the rule, and the rule was that Dutch music was not heard in Portugal and Portuguese music was not heard in Holland. Why? Firstly, because the self-esteem of those countries is not great and, secondly, because the peripheries do not want to be new irradiating centres, but exactly the same as the centres that already exist and, in that sense, the majority of programmers prefers to rely on

safe bets from the canon rather than risk any break. And when somewhat bizarre ideas, such as those I had at the CCB, do occur, a way is found, as we have seen, to make them almost inoperative. Thirdly, and this is my point, the ideology that makes up and governs the canon works internationally as *doxa*, as something unquestioned, and is imposed naturally as *the way life is*. It is not easy to escape it.

If humanity only formulates problems it wishes to solve, as old Marx said, it is certain that it cannot solve problems that it is not even able to formulate.

There are, meanwhile, other aspects that continue to perplex. The two cultural industries maintain very close working relationships with the recording industry. Thus, a pianist records the *n*th version of the Goldberg Variations or a new cycle of the Beethoven Symphonies, a conductor produces yet another version of *Don Giovanni* and this is normally seen by association, previously or afterwards, with concerts and tours of these works. As one sees in jazz, in rock and whatever else. There is a unique rationality which seeks to associate various components around the same artistic work, and

the Schoenberg Ensemble's choice of Claude Vivier that I mentioned previously is also part of this attitude. Discs have had a huge role in changing the habits or musical life. Music lovers and collectors of discs can argue interminably about whether a version by Alfred Brendel is better than one by Sviatoslav Richter, if John Elliott Gardiner's *Don Giovanni* is preferable to the version by Harnoncourt. I must point out here that, in this text, what I aim to point out and discuss is not ever the quality of the artists, composers or performers to whom I make reference. Normally, all the artists of the canon are of very high quality. It is not this that it is in question, and everyone must live with what exists and not what he would like to exist. What I wish to try to reveal is the working of musical society, in what way it lives, so to speak, rolled up in itself, in a kind of eternal return of the same thing. Boulez, in his conversation with Foucault, is as razor-sharp as ever: "It's important to see that there's not only a polarization in the past, but even a polarization concerning the past of the past. It is thus that one attains ecstasy hearing a performance of a classical work by a performer who died decades ago; but the ecstasy

becomes almost orgasmic when one can make reference to a performance from the 20th of July 1947, or then 30th of December 1938. A pseudo-culture of the document arises (...) Ah, if we had the first performance of the Ninth, even – above all – with its mistakes (...) This historicizing shell suffocates those who submit themselves to it, squeezes them within an asphyxiating rigidity. The infected air they breath makes their organism eternally fragile with regard to the adventure of now.”⁷.

Let us return to the perplexity. I spoke before of the renewed interest in new works from the 1980s onwards. In Portugal this was even more marked from the 1990s on. But here, there was accepted a social necessity for the commissioning of new works, what in the proclamation of principles are called creative incentives. These premières then attract reasonable audiences, when the halls do jot actually sell out. Thus far, all is normal. But then it is possible that a cultural organism dependent on the State spends 400,000 contos on an opera (como quer traduzir isto em dinheiro?!), or 60,000 or 20,000, it

⁷ Foucault, idem p 491

doesn't matter, on three or four performances, there being another organism, also dependent on the State, that considers that spending 4,000 contos on artist's fees and recording on video or audio is expensive! Can anybody explain this phenomenon to me? Do we stand before a dumb repetition of the Adorno/Benjamin polemic about auratic art? An inexcusable distraction concerning what is important to preserve today? Can it be that the democratic State prefers to reconstruct the sumptuous expenses of the court of King John V and keep new works as far as possible from the cultural industry of the masses, which is what discs would represent? The point is that the equation investment/profit is analysed according to such divergent criteria that one may speak of two opposing ways of thinking.

The problem is that currently almost nothing is preserved, whether scores or recordings. I believe, therefore, that after understanding the social need for commissions, one should go forward to understanding the social need for preserving works by these two means.

I believe in my music, and I make an individual effort to record my pieces and publish the scores, I come

up against all sorts of problems and, in the case of the CD *Versos*, with four pieces, the grant from IPAE (*traduzimos?*) was very small and I had to invest 500 contos. But if I buy many discs coming from a large number of countries, covered with the emblems and stamps of supporters and funding bodies, why should I not try to record? Because I am Portuguese? That's not a satisfactory argument.

When the Arditti Quartet performed and recorded at the CD five Portuguese quartets, I heard a number of extraordinary comments. Firstly, from Irvine Arditti himself: except for Nunes, whose quartet he had recorded for Erato with the customary funding from the Gulbenkian, he did not know any other Portuguese music. But how could he know it, if nobody ever showed it to him? (The Gulbenkian fulfilled for decades the noteworthy mission of a true replacement Minister of Culture. In addition, it is a private institution, has its own sources of income and, therefore, full rights to its own criteria. One cannot, and should not, ask it to do everything). The second phrase I retained was that the concert proved that even the most important artists didn't

mind playing Portuguese music if the proposal were made to them. They didn't mind! Finally, the third, that the concert of Portuguese quartets had, in the end, been better than the concert the day before with music by the English composers Ferneyhough, Birtwistle, Adès and Dillon. This was certainly based on the principle that it would normally be the other way round.

There, then, we have the ideology of the canon at its most splendid. It is for this reason that I have little respect for it. Because I know that it is regularly put out by the publications that appear from the centre with a critical apparatus but an ideological content, because it is based on preconceptions, formed and established long ago, because it has no need for any autonomy of thought and, finally, because it oppresses.

Translated by Ivan Moody