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***Institutionalization of Modernism from the Spirit of Fascism? Thoughts on Music and Serialism in Post-WWII Finland***

Fascism and Modernism are often considered contradictory terms. The aesthetic conservatism, regressiveness and nationalism of the former is seen as anti-modern and radically different from the experimental, innovative, revolutionary, and internationally oriented efforts of the latter. However, it is well known that many Modernist artists (such as Walter Gropius, Le Corbusier, Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, Igor Stravinski, Luigi Dallapiccola, Anton Webern, Julius Evola, Adalberto Libera, Ezra Pound, and Yrjö Kilpinen) either gained recognition from Fascist regimes or were, at some stage of their careers at least, fascinated by Fascism. Furthermore, recent studies have interpreted Fascism itself as a fundamentally Modernist movement that was not rejecting Modernism but aimed at an alternative Modernism.

The musical Modernism of the early 20th century was an extremely versatile movement. After the WWII, however, of the many braches of the field, it was the serial tradition that became emblematic of Modernism as a whole. At the same time, the first Finnish serial compositions were made.

In my paper, I will ask the following: are there reactions to or traces of Fascism in the post-WWII musical Modernism in Finland? And, if there are, how exactly can we interpret musical Modernism as related to Fascism? And finally, on what musical, historical or political grounds is it justifiable to ask these questions?

In my paper, I will combine the analysis of theoretical literature on the relationship of Fascism and Modernism (e.g. Roger Griffin, Richard Shorten, Mark Antliff, New Modernist Studies) with micro-historical study of the Finnish composer Erik Bergman (1911–2006), the “father figure” of Finnish Modernism, who studied in the Nazi Germany, but later emphasised his apoliticism.

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