

ture. If I assert, for example, that the psychoanalytic material of this chapter is subordinated to the Schenkerian voice-leading analyses, then I produce a representation of the music as if a thing. Coordination, on the other hand, tends to produce fantasies of space, more a signifying structure that is open than a signified structure that is closed. This is how Schenker and psychoanalysis relate in these songs—as coordinated structures of listening space.

In this chapter, I have examined the structure of the gaze in two of Schubert's late songs; in the next chapter, I turn back to popular music to interrogate the structure of the gaze in two recent versions of a rock song. This turn takes the rest of the chapters of the book into issues of music, representation, gender, and violence; in the next chapter, this violence will be understood as residing in the structure of the male gaze represented first in a high-tech, then thrash-funk version of "Intruder."

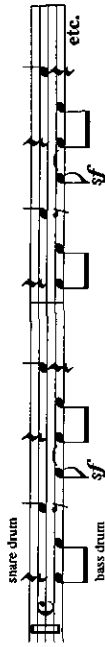
## 5

*Peter Gabriel's "Intruder,"  
a Cover, and the Gaze*

Peter Gabriel's "Intruder" is the first song on his third solo album entitled *Peter Gabriel* issued after his departure from Genesis. The sound of the album is more austere than his earlier work—an influence of the "new wave" producer Steve Lillywhite.<sup>1</sup> The song opens with a one-measure theme played by the snare drum and bass drum; it pervades most of the song: see ex. 39.<sup>2</sup>

The theme is clearly rooted in 1950s and 1960s rock and roll with the signature backbeat in the snare and the eighth notes in the bass drum. There are no cymbals, however, and this omission hardens the sound, makes the song sound threatening.<sup>3</sup> There is a *sforzando* on the bass drum's upbeat to the third beat. The third beat sounds too early; it impinges on the second beat, leaving a brief but haunting silence. Also, Gabriel did something to the fourth beat of the theme to make it sound as if the music were holding its breath. The real time pulse of the music continues to drive the theme along from measure to measure, while, immediately after the snare's backbeat on the fourth beat, the surface of the sound seems to vanish for a split second. It sounds like a sucking in of breath in anticipation of a loud noise, the sound of your breath right before a dish that you've dropped hits the floor.

In m. 3, a sound like a guitar pick being drawn very slowly along a very tight guitar string under heavy amplification emerges. I will call this the "pulling metal" sound. On the surface, it seems to signify literal intrusion into someone's space as if a screen were being forced. The sound is close to the listener, at once very real and very artificial.<sup>4</sup>



Example 39. Peter Gabriel's "Intruder," the opening percussion theme.



Example 40. Peter Gabriel's "Intruder," the "jolt" theme begun in m. 5.

Gabriel subtly prepares the listener for this "pulling metal" sound. If one listens very carefully to the first two measures of the piece (the two measures that immediately precede the entry of "pulling metal"), one can hear the "pulling metal" sound behind, as it were, the second beat (the first snare backbeat).

This is an acoustic intrusion into the listener's space because what we subliminally hear as secondary sound on the second beats of the opening percussion theme becomes primary sound shortly thereafter. In film theory, this is called "sneaking." Sounds, motives, and themes with which the viewer identifies come (as if from a position beyond our control) out of noise or ambient sound.<sup>5</sup> This example of musical sneaking and its intrusion into our listening space binds the listener to the intruder because of the above-mentioned closeness of the "pulling metal" sound. The link between the secondary sound of the second beat of the percussion theme and the emergence of the "pulling metal" sound in m. 3 is secured by Gabriel's choice of the moment at which the "pulling metal" emerges into full acoustic "view": it happens on the second beat of m. 3, the beat of the backbeat behind which it had been hiding. The "pulling metal" sound continues intermittently throughout the first sixteen measures.

In m. 5, Gabriel gives us two new sounds: a "jolt" and a synthesizer "riff." The jolt is shown in ex. 40; it continues for every measure from mm. 5–16. The jolt is a harmonic interval of a perfect fifth; it is overlaid on the opening percussion theme, articulating the first beat and the

*sforzando* upbeat to the third beat. The open fifth could suggest either B $\flat$  major or B $\flat$  minor.<sup>6</sup> The synthesizer "riff" sounds first in m. 5, as shown in ex. 41. This riff both clarifies and obscures the tonality of the song. The G $\flat$  on the upbeat to the third beat suggests B $\flat$  minor. Taken together (which is how we hear the two themes), the riff and the jolt produce a dissonance of a minor second on the upbeat to beat 3. The G $\flat$  clashes with the F $\sharp$ . The effect is one of a noise—a representation of a sound with meaning that is charged with ambiguity.<sup>7</sup>

The riff sounds only once in full in m. 5; from mm. 5–16, the performer improvises minimal "echoes" outlining the minor third of B $\flat$  minor. To me, mm. 5–16 sound like a fantasy of the intruder having entered a woman's space; the riff echoes minimally and hauntingly for eleven measures, as if poised and listening.

A theme in B $\flat$  major/minor sounds in mm. 16–19, as shown in ex. 42. The first measure of the theme expands the syncopated sound of the initial percussion theme; the second measure solidifies the riff's improvised echo described above. The first measure suggests B $\flat$  major, the second measure B $\flat$  minor. The note D $\flat$  defines the minor mode of the second measure of this theme, and Gabriel brings in distorted voices for the first time in the song right on the D $\flat$ . I hear the high, contorted voice as a male impersonation of a female voice.

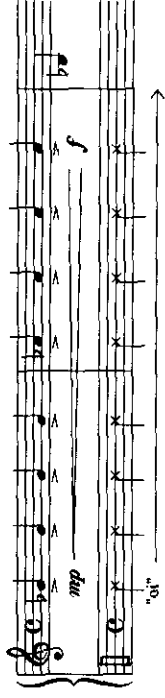
There is a long tradition in rock and roll of male singers imitating female voices.<sup>8</sup> Sometimes this suggests an erotic or playful androgyny (Little Richard, Michael Jackson); sometimes it suggests a fantasy of presymbolic aggression, as if one could get in touch with

Example 41. Peter Gabriel's "Intruder," the synthesizer "riff."



Example 42. Peter Gabriel's "Intruder," the B $\flat$  major/minor theme.





Example 43. Peter Gabriel's "Intruder," the "chant."



Example 44. Peter Gabriel's "Intruder," the major/minor theme with secondary articulations.

one's anal/sadistic "origins" before sexual difference.<sup>9</sup> There are two measures of "chant" from mm. 20–22, shown in ex. 43. Here, we get a choir of distant, distorted male voices. They chant in unpitched syllables on quarter notes that accompany the pitched notes in the example. The notes G<sup>b</sup>-A<sup>b</sup>-B<sup>b</sup> suggest at once the key of B<sup>b</sup> minor and the blues scale on which much rock and roll is based. The chant suddenly falls to the low B<sup>b</sup> as if fatigued. In this chant, there is a discrepancy in dynamics between the male, chanting voices and the pitched instrument. The pitched instrument *crescendos* through the A<sup>b</sup>s, while the male voices maintain a moderate dynamic level throughout.

From mm. 23–24, one clear and close note struck on a small metal object (a crotale? a triangle?) echoes for eight beats. With the vocal entry in m. 25, we retrospectively hear the "ringing" of mm. 23–24 as the announcement of vocal entry. And the "ringing" is another example of sneaking in the song. In the major/minor theme discussed above, there is a secondary sound of a crotale or triangle on crucial pitches of the theme, as shown by question marks in ex. 44.

We can now clearly link Gabriel's thematic sneaking with the representation of the intruder in the song; the crotale/triangle sound emerges from its hiding place in the major/minor theme to announce the solo entry that begins by asserting, taunting, affirming knowledge ("I know"). In m. 25, Peter Gabriel's voice enters. Here is the text as printed in the CD liner notes:

I know something about opening windows and doors  
 I know how to move quietly—to creep across creaky wooden floors  
 I know where to find precious things in all your cupboards and drawers

Slipping the clippers  
 Slipping the clippers through the telephone wires  
 The sense of isolation inspires  
 Inspires me

I like to feel the suspense when I'm certain you know I am there  
 I like you lying awake, your bated breath charging the air  
 I like the touch and the smell of all the pretty dresses you wear

Intruder's happy in the dark  
 Intruder come  
 Intruder come and he leave his mark  
 leave his mark

Peter Gabriel's voice as he sings the verse is very close to the microphone; he sings purely, quietly, as if right into the ear of the listener. For me, it sounds as if Gabriel were putting his arm around the male listener's shoulders and sharing with him the narrator's fantasy of intruding into the space of a woman. But how can a listener "identify" with a voice in a song, and how does the proximity of the voice determine listening identification?

In *La voix au cinéma*, Michel Chion discusses voices in film for which the viewer has not seen the source. He calls this voice the *voix acoustmatique*.<sup>10</sup> The acoustmatic voice in film is made possible by the binary on screen/off screen. In music, such a binary is replaced by a continuum of proximity to the listener's space. Many factors facilitate listening identification with a sung voice—clarity of register, closeness of recording, and minimum of distortion. Peter Gabriel's voice is clear, unstrained, close, acoustically pure, and quiet, singing to us from just the other side of the speaker.

Gabriel's voice changes as he sings the chorus; it becomes tighter, more distorted, more distant.<sup>11</sup> The intrusion fantasy undergoes a shift in these lines from rhetorical exposition ("I know," "I like"—coherent parallel structures sung clear and close to the listener) to a representation of action ("slipping the clippers," "slipping the clippers," "Intruder come and leave his mark"—reiterated fragments sung tighter and fur-

Example 45. Musical setting of each line in the verses of Peter Gabriel's "Intruder."

ther away from the listener). In the penultimate line of each chorus, there is an acoustic realignment. With the line "the sound of it inspires me / inspires me," Gabriel's voice returns to clear, close, and pure singing. This realignment suggests that the music is all about male impotence. The narrator can tell the fantasy (homocerotically to a male listener, sadiistically to a female listener) as long as there is rhetorical distance. The music to each line is shown in ex. 45.

The opening perfect fifth of the voice is remarkable. I can think of very few songs that open with this interval.<sup>12</sup> In "Intruder," its emergence signifies sneaking; the text and the music "know." We first heard the B $\flat$ -F $\sharp$  fifth played harmonically at the "jolt" idea first heard in m. 5. The harmonic perfect fifth that elaborates the characteristic accents of the opening percussion theme becomes the melodic fifth that sets "I know." The open fifth gets filled in with the *minor* third D $\flat$  that we had heard in the major/minor theme. There is a larger-scale example of musical sneaking going on here as well. We first hear the pitches B $\flat$ , D $\flat$ , and E $\flat$  in the major/minor theme; the addition of the F $\sharp$  on the vocal entry allows Gabriel to inscribe the space of these pitches into a pure, open, hollow fifth. There is something horrifying about the triplets on the pitch D $\flat$ ; the D $\flat$ s signify the minor mode associated with women for centuries. A triplet adds a note where two are expected; it suggests a quickening of motion, an excess overlaid with self-assured mastery.

At the bridge, Gabriel offers a xylophone solo that moves back and forth between the right and the left channels—a common technique in rock-and-roll recording since the British Invasion. This bridge says, "This is just a song." It gives the listener an alibi; it is a virtuoso studio construction, innocent, expressive, and sophisticated.<sup>13</sup>

After the words are over, an odd, distant whistle sounds. It is pure, like Gabriel's voice throughout most of the song, yet it is very far

away—echoing into the distance away from the listener. Whistles have been a part of popular culture for a long time. The wolf whistle, so common in classic Hollywood cinema and 1950s television, draws lines around the sexuality of women's bodies, around their breasts, around their hips, and down to their ankles. Whistles are also common substitutes for calls; they are thus pure signifiers of interpellation. Whistles come from behind; they stand for "you!" Whistles can also signify male bonding, as in the unison chorus of men whistling in *Bridge over the River Kwai*. Whistles often signify careless abandon, satisfaction, and mastery.<sup>14</sup> See ex. 46.

The melody expands the initial percussion theme's syncopation onto both beat 2 and beat 4. This melody represents the narrator's fantasy of mastery in the song. The "chant" had outlined an ascending minor (or blues) scale rising from G $\flat$  to A $\flat$  before a fatigued collapse to the low B $\flat$ . The whistle melody obsessively encloses the A $\flat$  that had collapsed in the "chant" idea between the perfect fourth F $\sharp$ -B $\flat$ . The A $\flat$ -F $\sharp$  glissando emphasizes the melody's representation of mastery. Throughout the whistle melody, the accompaniment sounds extraordinarily drained: the percussion theme that had been pounding throughout the song becomes a faint and irregular throb.

At the arrow on the A $\flat$  in ex. 46, the whistle cuts off, and Peter Gabriel sings "I am the Intruder" on a low B $\flat$ . This is another example of large-scale sneaking in the song: the collapse in the "chant" becomes associated with the climax of intrusion later in the song. On the one hand, the line "I am the Intruder" is trite and ridiculous. Yet it is not the obvious denotative value of the utterance that matters. As in the alternation of vocal distance within the song itself in which Gabriel can master only what he "tells," so, too, at the end of the song, his fantasy of power is complete, not with the whistle, but with the speech act that connects him to his listener. The music represents this language-bound

Example 46. The whistle at the end of Peter Gabriel's "Intruder."

fantasy of power by a shift in the percussion from the limp “throb” idea that suddenly stiffens after the line “I am the Intruder” to a return of the initial pounding percussion theme with which the song ends.<sup>15</sup>

For me, this song is all about castration anxiety. In *The Acoustic Mirror*, Kaja Silverman discusses “discursive interiority” and “castration” as central to representations of gender. “Discursive interiority” represents the fact that all subjects are, in part, “feminine” since we are born into language and other structures of the Symbolic Order that both determine our subjectivity and are always already in place before we are born. In order to deal with this “feminine” part of their nature, men disavow and then displace their castration anxiety outward onto active, potent, visionary/fantasy representations of men who elicit the real or foreclosed scream of a woman.<sup>16</sup> Of the scream, Silverman says: “Hollywood is at the greatest pains to extract from the female voice, i.e., the cry. (One thinks here of *Psycho* . . . which enshrines a musically simulated version of that sound, or of the more recent *Blow-Out* [1981], which turns upon the search for a ‘realistic’ female scream).”<sup>17</sup> In Peter Gabriel’s “Intruder,” the male listener is encouraged to displace his castration anxiety onto the narrator, who elicits the scream of a woman—elegantly covered by the xylophone solo.

#### “Intruder” by Primus

Primus is a three-man band in the thrash-funk scene that is a product of blue-collar communities outside San Francisco. The band consists of Larry Lalonde, guitar; Tim Alexander, drums; and Les Claypool, six-string, fretless bass guitar, and kazoo, and vocals. “Intruder” is the first song on *Miscellaneous Debris*.

The Primus version of “Intruder” opens with the percussion theme shown above; the music is so similar it need not be notated again. The Primus percussion theme, however, is much more aggressive than in Peter Gabriel’s version; some of the backbeats (especially at the outset of the song) are struck on or very close to the rim of the snare drum. The theme is also very close to our ears; it is relentless. While the Gabriel percussion theme leans heavily on the upbeat to the third beat in the bass drum, the Primus version pounds each beat evenly.

The jolt theme begins in m. 5; it is answered by a laconic minor third D<sub>4</sub>-F<sub>4</sub> (the F<sub>4</sub> sounds flat to me) in the bass guitar.<sup>18</sup> The jolt continues



Example 47. “Intruder” by Primus, the stalking theme.

for eight measures, doubling the phrase length of the opening percussion theme. The major/minor theme is at once more tight and more loose than in Gabriel’s version. The tightness is produced by the careful rhythmic precision of the theme. The looseness is produced by the laconic bass guitar theme, whose dead-slow harmonic rhythm is intensified by an improvisatory decoration of B $\flat$  minor for the repeat of the two-measure theme.

The chant theme doubles the G $\flat$ s and A $\flat$ s an octave lower; the voices are so distorted it is hard to tell male voice from guitar from a synthesizer from noise.<sup>19</sup> While Gabriel announces the vocal entry with a pure sound of a bell, the Primus version empties out for two measures (mm. 19–20) to the percussion theme alone. With the vocal entry, Primus gives us two new details of the song at the same time—a “stalking” theme in the bass guitar and a voice that is extremely distorted.

What I find so powerful in Primus’s sense of rhythm is the way that all beats are accented. As in the opening percussion theme, the bass stalking theme accents each and every note, making each note an attack that will not be subordinated to any other. See ex. 47.

This theme stresses the flat seventh—A $\flat$  from the B $\flat$  major/minor blues scale, which is also prominent in the chant theme. What makes it so electrifying is its proximity. Peter Gabriel’s voice is close, as if whispering/singing in the listener’s ears right at the speakers. The bass “stalking theme” seems even closer, as if on *our* side of the speakers. By *the speaker*, I mean an acoustic equivalent to a concept that is common in art criticism—the picture plane. The picture plane is a fantasy of a threshold between the space of the viewer and the space of a representation.<sup>20</sup> I would like to name a similar phenomenon in music the *listening plane*—an impression of a threshold at the surface of a speaker that divides our listening space from a fantasy of performance space. By breaching the listening plane, the bass stalking theme impedes identification with the narrator’s fantasy of intrusion.

As a complement to the proximity of the bass, the *voice* enters very

far away and wired tight. The proximity of the bass and the distance of the voice persist for the entire song; it is this structure and the subjectivities that it produces that differentiate the Peter Gabriel from the Primus version of "Intruder."<sup>21</sup>

Les Claypool's voice is difficult to locate. On the one hand, it sounds *in front* of the listener (if one imagines listening to music coming out of speakers placed in front); on the other hand, it sounds "dark," as if hiding. For me, Les Claypool's voice is a representation of a listening gaze. Like the visual gaze in which something that cannot "see" seems to "see" (the house of Norman's mother at Lilah's approach in the famous scene from *Psycho*), the voice in the Primus cover of "Intruder" seems to come out of a darkened space ahead. The unsettling effect of this darkness is made possible by the structure of the ear and how we learn to locate sounds, voices, and music in early subjectivity.

Film theorists have discussed the semiotic structure of film music as being based on the "all-around" quality of acoustic perception. And this theory can be supplemented by theorizing relations among directionality, acoustic representation, and subjectivity.<sup>22</sup> In a nutshell, the "all-around" theory asserts that we *hear* "all-around" and *see* in one direction only. The idea is theoretically appealing; it links representations of sound to the presymbolic realm of sonorous enclosure; it places visual signs clearly within the binary of the Imaginary Order.

But we hear both all-around *and* in front and in back. The *front* of the ear has little hair, and the molding spirals of tissue amplify sounds in the mid-range—making it more possible for us to hear language. The minimum of hair makes sounds heard in front of the body "bright." Sounds heard from the front enter the ear canal.

The *back* of the ear, however, has much more hair, and sounds do not enter the ear canal through it; thus, sounds are more diffuse, "darker." The ear thus enables sounds and representations of sound to be at once unified, all-over sensations *and* carriers of signals and signs from the binary world of the Imaginary Order. We hear and see ahead; we hear what is behind in an acoustic penumbra.

In general, the fact that the structure of the ear has both an all-over and a binary quality is crucial to the psychoanalytic argument of this book. The *all-over* field of acoustic perception links sounds and their representations to the sonorous envelope; the binary *behind/in front* of

acoustic perception links representations of the sonorous envelope to the acoustic- and later visual mirror stage. More specifically, the structures described above account for the uncanny listening gaze of Les Claypool's voice in the Primus cover of "Intruder."

Peter Gabriel's "Intruder" is all about representing the castration anxiety of the male listener. Gabriel's voice is close as he shares his secret fantasy that soon becomes the listener's; the musical motives that accompany the fantasy soon take over as the driving forces of intrusion once themes sneak out from their musical and psychoanalytic hiding places. Gabriel evokes but tastefully spares the listener the woman's scream.

The Primus version of "Intruder" represents in sound a listening gaze that blocks a transparent identification between the listener and the narrator's fantasy of intrusion.

But what are listening equivalents of Lacan's eye/gaze binary? There are no given acoustic equivalents to the eye/gaze structure, so I call the acoustic equivalent of eye the *listening look* and the listening equivalent of the gaze the *listening gaze*.<sup>23</sup> The listening look is produced by the ear of the listener that maintains the binary distinction between the listener's subjective position and a music's object position. This binary is clear throughout the Peter Gabriel version of "Intruder." We listen clearly on our side of the acoustic plane described above as Peter Gabriel, close, but always just on the other side, tells his fantasy.

The listening gaze, on the other hand, is the music listening to *us*. How can music listen to us if we are silent listeners? By pinning us down. The Primus version of "Intruder" pins the listener through the pounding bass guitar and percussion that accompanies the text throughout, sounding just on *our* side of the listening plane. The voice pins us as well by singing in a space that curiously echoes *behind* the bass guitar and percussion. In order of proximity to our ears, the Primus version of "Intruder" pins us to the following layers of the music: (1) the bass guitar and percussion, (2) the listening plane, (3) the lead singer's voice, and (4) a space into which his voice echoes.

While both versions of "Intruder" rely on gender-specific violent scenarios, Peter Gabriel's version confirms a traditional male subject position at the expense of female object specularity. The Primus cover

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of "Intruder" forces the listener to confront the horror of his castration anxiety by refusing to cover up the fantasy scream and by pinning the listener as described above. This pinning threatens to violate the listener's space, threatening to make the music sound like a representation of the text's fantasy. In short, the music holds up to the male listener an acoustic mirror in which he hears his own horrid desire.<sup>24</sup>

This chapter examined structures of the gaze and male aggression in two versions of a rock song; in the next chapter, the musical representation of male violence is extended in two ways. First, the next chapter looks at a large-scale social and historical context for the violence associated with German Oi Musik. Second, the chapter describes a general style of music and the ideological structures that support it, as opposed to individual songs or the works of one composer.

The next chapter moves as well into the musical and theoretical area of postrock. It is extremely problematic to use the prefix *post-* in connection with popular music. Andreas Huyssen has described postmodernism in art, history, politics, and discourse as intimately related to *modernism*. He views postmodernism as a revitalization of modernism itself, appropriating, while at the same time critiquing, modernism's allegiance to modernization, monumentalism, and an aesthetic of progress.<sup>25</sup>

Rock and roll came together in the mid-1950s as a synthesis of the blues, country western, and Tin Pan Alley musical traditions—a very different past from the modernity of avant-garde Western culture.

For me, there is something quintessentially *modern* about post-World War II rock and roll in the West—the increasing glorification of technology in musical instruments and sound systems that reproduce rock and roll, the urge to find increasingly "new" sounds, forms of expression that surpass antecedents, the massive, public spectacle, an increasing monumentality of compositions, and glorification and commodification of individual subjectivity. At the same time, there is something *postmodern* underlying the entire phenomenon of post-World War II rock and roll in the West: its appropriation by worldwide advertising, its rootlessness, its increasing emphasis on multiple media, and its multivalent textuality (covers marking and remarking songs), and the rock star as a simulacrum of a rock star. Rock and a postmodern

critique of modernism come together, not in academic discourse, but in the practice of the music of the 1960s and its critique in the West of the "establishment" and the war in Vietnam.

*Postrock* describes an impression that a body of rock has been set aside, not as a set of procedures, traditions, forms, to be extended into the future along a red thread of continuity, but rather as a store of materials from which to put together "new" music from "old" bits and pieces.<sup>26</sup> The next chapter will explore what bits and pieces of rock and roll are put together in contemporary German Oi Musik.