

CHAPTER ONE

Music and Democracy

To come to terms with the turns taken in and by our arguments, . . . we often must re-cognize, re-poeticize, even re-animate them. We must re-turn the motion to our figures. (John S. Nelson, *Tropes of Politics: Science, Theory, Rhetoric, Action* 1998, 28)

Concert, dissonance, harmony, and, by analogy, chorus, orchestra, symphony—philosophers often employ musical metaphors to describe political processes. National anthems, military marches, and protest songs—music also marks many political events. However, music is seldom included in the repertoire of *political* communication.¹ Puzzled by this omission, I began to explore various relationships between music and politics. What associations between them are suggested by these musical metaphors? Why do all existing societies have their traditional forms of music? Why is music also so prominent in the political activism of social movements? How does music contribute to processes of identity formation and community building? Does it facilitate understanding between individuals? Across cultures? Beyond language? How does it work to sustain political cultures and promote political change? Most important, how might musical practices further our understanding of democratic politics?

Three larger concerns motivate this series of questions. Each involves a false opposition or, at least, an overdrawn one, which limits mainstream concepts of politics. The first

is the distinction between reason and rhetoric or, more narrowly, philosophy and poetry. Understood as empty eloquence, mere style or, worse, manipulative speech, rhetoric is often opposed to the rigors of formal, deductive, logical, systematic, etc., argument. This opposition is part of a larger one between humanistic and scientific methods of inquiry. In his *Tropes of Politics, Science, Theory, Rhetoric, Action*, John Nelson defines rhetoric broadly as “a concern with what is communicated, how, by, and for whom; to what effect; under what circumstances; and with which alternatives” (1998, xv). He argues that rhetorical studies are no substitute for logical analyses, but instead augment them. Since the argumentative style of any discipline is intended to persuade its chosen audience, hypotheses and data have meaning only in a rhetorical context. Like literary arts, philosophical logic, and scientific inquiry employ culturally-specific rhetorical styles. Studies of their rhetoric acknowledge the aesthetic and political context—the community of language and power—within which their arguments succeed or fail. Rhetoric persuades audiences by adapting to established conventions, following set traditions, and, when necessary, creating new meanings. Attention to rhetoric promotes the reflective interpretation and creative expansion of language and, with it, human knowledge. Nelson writes: “rhetoric of political inquiry should strive to improve research and action by teaching people engaged in studying or practicing politics to learn from their own inquiries. Especially they should learn how their rationality and inquiry are thoroughly rhetorical, truly tropal, intensely political” (1998, 33).

Nelson’s approach to understanding rhetoric owes more to critical theory, broadly defined to include deconstruction, genealogy, hermeneutics, and phenomenology, than to game-theoretic analyses of strategic action. He is more concerned with how societies create meanings than with how politicians win—or lose—arguments and elections (Nelson 1998, 9). This orientation, one that I share, distinguishes “rhetoric” from what William Riker defines as “heresthetics.” Heresthetics is the “manipulation of the structure of tastes and alternatives

within which decisions are made, both the objective structure and the structure as it appears to participants. It is the study of the *strategy* of decision” (1983, 55). For Riker, rhetoric is a subset of heresthetics. Heresthetics structures the political context within which rhetorical strategies are used to persuade adversaries (1983, 61). Political scientists and, more specifically, social movement scholars, have long studied a version of what Riker calls “heresthetics” under the rubrics of political culture (Almond and Verba 1980, 1989). However, this approach to rhetoric arguably relegates culture to a mere frame for the real activity of movements, which is politics (Eyerman and Jamison 1998, chapter 1; Tarrow 1998, introduction). I focus instead on how rhetoric links cultural expression with political action by constructing interpretive communities, by forming, sustaining, and transforming individual and collective identities. This is a process of *reproducing* politics, a process of symbolic action, including symbolic domination and symbolic protest (Eyerman and Jamison 1998; Lee 1998; Melucci 1996).

The tropes that interest me most here are metaphors and their cognates, similes. The Greek root of metaphor is *metapherein*, which means to bear or to carry from one place to another. It suggests a transfer of meanings from one context to another (Miller 1979, 156). In “Four Master Tropes,” Kenneth Burke defines metaphor as “a device for seeing something *in terms* of something else” (1969, 503). He proposes “perspective” or “point of view” as appropriate synonyms: “metaphor tells us something about one character as considered from the point of view of another character. And to consider A from the point of view of B is, of course, to use B as a *perspective* upon A.” The transfer of meaning in metaphor illuminates some aspects of “A” and simultaneously minimizes others. It also involves some incongruity, since similarity is not the sole basis for comparison. Metaphors do their work by creating new associations, by invoking available meanings that previously went unacknowledged (Johnson 1981, 24). As a result, when a metaphor is translated into literal language some loss of meaning will inevitably occur.

According to Lakoff and Johnson, “any adequate theory must explain both how metaphors are grounded in the

common experience within a culture and how new metaphors can alter the conceptual system in terms of which we experience and talk about our world” (1999, 33). They argue that metaphors should be understood as both cognitive and cultural. As cognitive structures, metaphors are primordial, cross-cultural, expressions of human beings’ embodied consciousness. The transfer of meaning characteristic of these primary metaphors is a conflation of sensory and subjective experience, a result of an infant’s inability to distinguish self and other. Lakoff and Johnson write: “From a conceptual point of view, primary metaphors are cross-domain mappings, from a source domain (the sensorimotor domain) to a target domain (the domain of subjective experience) preserving inference and sometimes preserving lexical representation” (1999, 58). Some examples of primary metaphors are “more is up” or “close is warm” or “knowing is seeing” and, I argue, “voice is music.” Where embodied experience is similar, primary metaphors are likely to be shared constructs, even to take universal forms. However, these conceptual metaphors employ a variety of culturally-specific linguistic referents. Basic concepts have multiple logics and with them “multiple metaphorical structurings” (Lakoff and Johnson 1999). In this sense, metaphors are not only an embodied cognition, but also an imaginative rationality (Lakoff and Johnson 1999). For example, in American politics, liberals and conservatives construe “Government as Parent,” but they vary in whether it is (or should be) a “Nurturant Parent” or “Strict Father,” respectively. These different metaphors guide their thinking about a variety of moral and political issues (Lakoff 2002). Yet, the metaphors involved in their reasoning processes are often so unconscious that they appear to be common sense. As Nelson argues, over time “our” tropes begin to seem literal or even right, hence, the need arises to re-turn to them (1998, 29).

This brings me to a second false opposition, between aggregative, deliberative, and more recently, agonistic democracy. Political theorists have long distinguished two basic types of democracy: aggregative and deliberative.² Aggregative

democrats describe a politics of instrumental reason, private interests, competitive elections, representative officials, and institutionalized power. Deliberative democracy instead directly involves citizens in public discourse about political issues, a process that ideally enlarges their perspectives and produces consensual decisions. Deliberative theorists today have largely conceded the dominance of aggregative politics in modern western states. They are focused on developing more inclusive communication within existing political institutions (elections, courts, and legislatures) and extending deliberative processes to private interactions (economic and familial). In deliberative democratic theory, new social movements complement aggregative organizations, like interest groups, lobbying firms, and political parties, as vehicles for political participation. Social movements not only work to influence politico-economic institutions, but also help to give politics the “sense of meaning” that sustains a vital civil society.

Among critics of deliberative democracy, a third theory is increasingly prominent: agonistic democracy (Connolly 1999; Bickford 1996; Brown 1995; Honig 1993). Agonistic democrats affirm what William Connolly calls the “politics of becoming” or “that conflictual process by which new identities are propelled into being by moving the preexisting shape of diversity, justice, and legitimacy” (1999, 10). Social movements, Connolly argues, not only deploy established identities to engage political institutions, they also embody “fugitive currents of energies and possibility exceeding the cultural fund of identities and differences. . . .” (1999, 143). Working with these micropolitical energies, they alter perceptions at a subliminal level and change the shape, even preclude the option, of politics-as-usual. Ideally, they promote forms of “self-artistry,” including “relational arts,” which continually reinvoke “the plurivocity of being” (Connolly 1999, 7). Connolly describes the potential result as a democratic politics characterized by “a deep pluralism nourished by a generous ethos of engagement” (1999, 130).

Democratic theorists of all three types use vocal metaphors, but they do so in different ways.³ Aggregative democrats describe a visually-based politics of viewpoints

and perspectives, symmetry and reciprocity—of mirrors and mirroring (Young 1997, 50). A “logic of identity” operates here, which requires that representatives “substitute” or “stand-in” for their constituents (Young 2000, 123). The “voice” of the people is quickly translated into votes cast, limited to counting “ayes” or “nays” (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995; Flammang 1997). Deliberative theorists tend instead to translate voice into speech and, more narrowly, argument. As their critics note, the deliberative ideal of rational argument can privilege the communication style of middle-class white men and marginalize women and other minorities (Young 2000). It may also reflect the origins of modern western democracy in a literary public sphere (Landes 1995). According to Walter Ong (1991), the transition from oral to literate societies introduced a world of visually represented verbal material. Sound or, more precisely, sound/ing, a moving material force, became letters and words, objects separate(d) from their contexts. The early bourgeois public was a “reading public,” adept at “text formed thought,” including “abstract categorization,” “formally logical reasoning processes,” and “articulated self-analysis” (1991, 55, 74, 82). As I discuss later, deliberative democrats’ emphasis on rational argument reinforces Ong’s distinction between orality and literacy (Biakolo 1999; Boyarin 1992; Hudson 1994).⁴ Like aggregative democrats, they tend to translate vocal expressions into a visually-based symbolic structure.

However, recently deliberative democrats have begun to pluralize forms of political communication. Iris Young (1997) argues for what she calls a “communicative democracy,” which supplements rational argument with greeting, rhetoric, and storytelling. These practices “recognize the embodiment and particularity of interlocutors” and provide “ways of speaking across difference in the absence of significant shared understandings” (1997, 69).⁵ For Young, “Public communication . . . also includes politicized art and culture—film, theater, song, and story—intended to influence a wider public to understand the society or some of its members in particular and often different ways” (2000,

168). Yet artistic and cultural expressions that “reclaim” group identities do not necessarily qualify as political discourse (2000, 104). Young maintains that “primary claims of justice . . . refer to experiences of structural inequality more than cultural difference” (2000, 105).⁶

By separating cultural from political communication, Young sustains—even as she loosens—the connections between rational argument and political discourse. In a different context, Nancy Fraser challenges democratic theorists who limit struggles for justice to redistributive politics. She argues that

economic injustice and cultural injustice are usually interimbricated so as to reinforce each other dialectically. Cultural norms that are unfairly biased against some are institutionalized in the state and the economy; meanwhile, economic disadvantage impedes equal participation in the making of culture, in public spheres, and in everyday life. The result is often a vicious circle of cultural and economic subordination. (1997, 15)

Fraser does not specifically discuss the implications of this “redistribution/recognition dilemma” for forms of political communication. In his recent proposal for “discursive democracy,” John Dryzek suggests how they might intersect (2000). Like Young, Dryzek regards rhetoric as part of political discourse and stresses its importance for communication across cultural boundaries. However, for Dryzek, cross-cultural communication occurs not only between distinct subcultures in the public sphere, but also between those subcultures and state institutions that have their own political culture (2000, 167–168). Dryzek shares deliberative democrats’ concern that public officials will use their political positions to develop rhetorical strategies that manipulate citizens emotionally. To counter this tendency, he stipulates that the various rhetorics of democratic politics must meet the same criteria as rational arguments: they must be noncoercive and connect particular interests with general interests.

Although deliberative democrats' efforts to create a more inclusive discourse are significant, they remain focused on controlling the e/motions that move civil society and, hence, limited to verbal communication. According to Dunn and Jones, "human vocality encompasses all the voice's manifestations (for example, speaking, singing, crying, and laughing), each of which is invested with social meanings not wholly determined by linguistic content" (1994, 1). Agonistic democrats extend vocal metaphors further, beyond spoken words to moving sounds. The sounds of embodied voices form a part of, what Connolly calls, the "visceral register" of inter/subjective experience (1999, 3). Visceral responses are extralinguistic, "thought-imbued intensities," which prompt disgust and revulsion and inspire ritual and symbol (1999, 29). Triggered by the amygdala, a primitive brain nodule, and stored in the hippocampus, a cranial site of primal memories, these responses often bypass more complex body/brain/culture networks and relays. In *Neuropolitics, Thinking, Culture, Speed* (2002) Connolly explores how cinema, in particular, combines image, voice, sound, rhythm, and music to work its effects at multiple— affective, cognitive, and physical—levels of viewers' experience. Culture, he suggests, is many layered, and politics, including democracy, unpredictably mobile. For agonistic democrats, like Connolly, "artful-selves" and "experimenting constituencies" are two—subjective and intersubjective—sides of a "politics of becoming" (1999, 149). Social movements continually shift back and forth, up and down, using the energies of a visceral politics as resources to move institutional politics forward in the pursuit of justice.

In *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, Iris Young suggests why aggregative and deliberative democrats might restrict or minimize the role of this visceral level of politics (1990, 131–132). Following Anthony Giddens, she argues that interactions between subjects occur on three related levels: discursive consciousness, practical consciousness, and a "basic security system" or "ontological integrity." Although the first two levels are largely conscious, the third level engages psychological deep structures. Young claims that most

forms of oppression have now receded from discursive consciousness, and that they are receding from practical consciousness. However, unconscious motivations continue to manifest themselves in group-specific languages, including distinctions between so-called rational and affective or corporeal aspects of communication. Political theorists have to a great extent neglected these subconscious and/or unconscious forms of oppression. Young writes:

A conception of justice that starts from the concept of oppression must break with such a limitation of moral and political judgment to discursively conscious and intended action. If unconscious reactions, habits, and stereotypes reproduce the oppression of some groups, then they should be judged unjust, and therefore should be changed. (1990, 150)

She proposes extending moral judgment to “habitual interactions, bodily reactions, unthinking speech, feelings, and symbolic associations” (1990, 150). At this deepest level oppression is enacted through a “body aesthetic” (1990, 149).

To recognize nonverbal communication as a form of rhetoric, even an aspect of political discourse, is to challenge a third overdrawn distinction, the opposition between aesthetics and politics. Early articulations of deliberative democracy claimed that it “draws no bright line between political speech and other sorts of expression” (Cohen 1989, 30). Yet Cohen distinguishes “non-political expressions” from “the deliberative conception [which] construes politics as aiming in part at the formation of preferences and convictions, not just at their articulation and aggregation” (1989, 29). Gutmann and Thompson also discuss rhetorical appeals as precursors to deliberative politics: “Nondeliberative means may be necessary to achieve deliberative ends” (1996, 134). Even Dryzek earlier stated that “there are . . . domains of life where discursive democracy does not belong. Communicative rationality finds its grounding in the linguistic interaction of collective life. It does not speak to theater, wit, religion, music, visual arts, play, poetry, or private experience, unless of course

those activities enter into the constitution of collective choices” (1990, 220). Regarding new social movements, Dryzek suggests that “the description new *political* movements would be more appropriate, though it is probably too late for such renaming to stick” (1990, 49).

Deliberative democrats’ attempts to contain cultural politics, especially more embodied discourses, reflect their fears of an aestheticized politics. These fears may be well-founded. George Kateb writes of “the power of an unaware and unrationalized aestheticism to move people to act immorally with an apparent innocence” (2000, 6). Yet he admits that aesthetic cravings are unavoidably human. We seek satisfaction for our senses, our imaginations, in the pursuit of beauty, itself part of a larger search for meaning. Kateb writes: “Aestheticism” is “the effort to get from experience (let me clumsily call it non-art) what persons ordinarily seek and often find in works of art—high, low, or middling. Art should be the site where the most intense aesthetic satisfactions are found” (2000, 12). When “social reality” becomes the primary site of aesthetic experience, these cravings are all too often either ignored and/or manipulated. Kateb distinguishes a proper aesthetic attitude—one of distanced, detached observation—from the cravings inadequately satisfied by an aestheticized politics. The proper attitude can, he claims, contribute to a “democratic aestheticism” or a “receptivity or responsiveness to as much of the world as possible—its persons, its events and situations, its conditions, its patterns and sequences” (2000, 31). This democratic aestheticism is self-conscious and self-controlled; it does not trump morality, but instead serves it.

If public discourse is inevitably rhetorical, the issue becomes how—not whether—aesthetics and politics are related. Although a “democratic aestheticism” may initially seem compelling, I argue that the tension Kateb identifies between aesthetics, ethics, and politics itself presumes a specific body aesthetic.⁷ It replicates deliberative democrats’ inattention to what Orville Lee calls processes of symbolic domination. Lee understands civil society as a symbolic order

that constitutes individual and collective identity. Social categories are institutionalized and materialized both in the dominant discourse—a “public of letters”—and in the cultural practices of counter-publics. As Lee puts it,

It is important . . . to see the impact of the constitutive force of the symbolic order as *two-sided*. This symbolic force both *constrains* (i.e., constitutes and disciplines) the range of meanings attached to social categories (and the *social bodies* they reference) and *enables* symbolic practices (i.e., the political and institutional claims made on the basis of social categories) which affirm or contest the existing range of meanings. (1998, 444)

Lee defends a concept of “symbolic protest,” which challenges not only deliberative democrats’ commitment to rational argument, but also Kateb’s conscious, controlled aesthetic judgment. Both presume that power relations do not penetrate our very notions of democratic discourse. By privileging rational argument, deliberative democrats practice what Kateb calls an “unconscious aestheticism.” They separate proper procedures for democratic legitimacy from the pursuit of social justice, and permit the former to delimit the latter. However, democratic discourse is only legitimate when it includes the voices of all citizens, and such inclusivity requires pluralizing the styles as well as the topics of communication (Young 2000).

“Voice as music,” I argue, provides an especially productive site for promoting a more inclusive democratic discourse. Song lyrics frequently represent political views even as they express cultural identities. More important, as moving sound, music blurs and crosses, defines and expands relationships between self and other, challenging established identities and institutions. In a passage worth quoting at length, Simon Frith describes this process:

In taking pleasure from black or gay or female music I don’t thus identify as black or gay or female . . . but,

rather, *participate in imagined forms of democracy and desire*, imagined forms of the social and the sexual. And what makes music special in this familiar cultural process is that musical identity is both fantastic—idealizing not just oneself but also the social world one inhabits—and real: it is enacted in activity. Music making and music listening, that is to say, are bodily matters; they involve what one might call *social movements*. In this respect, musical pleasure is not derived from fantasy—it is not mediated by daydreams—but is experienced directly: music gives us a real experience of what the ideal could be. (1996, 74)

The aesthetic ideal Frith expresses here may include “beauty,” but this is not its crucial feature. More important is what Jean Harrell calls “profundity.” According to Harrell, musical rhythms and sounds often evoke primal experiences shared cross-culturally. “Profundity” is “rooted in a rudimentary recall . . . recognition of an intrinsic value in the biological fact of life established previsually, therefore probably prenatally” (1992, 20–21). I will argue that music avoids the dangers of essentialism, since its moving sounds bridge the various dualisms on which essentialized differences depend (Frith 1996). This is true whether profundity is understood in biological/cultural, neurological/psychological, or material/spiritual terms. However, profundity is not an aesthetic criterion that enables us to discriminate between disciplinary and emancipatory music or, in Kateb’s terms, between democratic music and more suspect forms.

Earlier I mentioned Dryzek’s stipulation that democratic rhetorics must satisfy the same standards of noncoercion and generalizability as so-called rational arguments. Orville Lee provides more extensive criteria for determining whether symbolic practices meet democratic standards of inclusivity. Moving beyond Kateb’s formal aesthetic, he suggests three substantive criteria for making judgments about aesthetic creations: 1) “the quality of knowledge about the symbolic order that they bring into existence”; 2) “their contribution to de-hierarchization of existing symbolic cate-

gories”; 3) “the types of less coercive and less hierarchical symbolic interactions that they bring into the repertoire of symbolic practices” (1998, 450). The musical metaphors and practices I consider in later chapters meet these criteria in different ways and to varying extents. More important in the present context, they suggest that Kateb’s distinction between aesthetic cravings and a democratic aestheticism may itself constitute a form of symbolic domination, an attempt to control corporeal aspects of aesthetic experience.

Having troubled often overdrawn distinctions between aesthetics and politics, types of democracy, and reason and rhetoric, I now return to my opening question: How might musical practices further our understanding of democratic politics? In the following chapters, I explore music as metaphor and model for democratic politics. I first consider how Jürgen Habermas and John Rawls employ musical metaphors—voice and symphony, respectively—to express the sense of justice that animates their discourse ideals. In chapter two, I argue that Habermas’s vocal metaphors reveal both the motivating force and the cultural limits of his deliberative democracy. For Habermas, mutual understanding is best enabled by purely linguistic and, hence, rational, communication. He describes the rationalization-cum-linguistification of society as a transition from sacred to secular, primitive to modern, and oral to literate, worldviews. Since the rational subjects and critical publics of western democracy originated in literary reading rooms, salons, and coffeehouses, it is no surprise that his public discourse follows a textually-based form, that is, rational argument. As political actors, citizens learn to translate their existential and/or subcultural experiences into claims for legal rights. Habermas’s vocal metaphors reveal how much is lost when embodied voices assume generalized form as public text. By displacing voice/s, he reveals a deeper commitment, which limits his deliberative democracy: the desire to resolve differences into harmony.

In chapter three, I argue that Rawls’s political liberalism provides a musical structure for the resolution of differences that deliberative democrats so often seek. Like Habermas, Rawls relies on intuitive ideas of a liberal political culture to

support the principles of justice chosen by his democratic citizens. Rawls draws his concept of their well-ordered society—a social union of social unions—from Wilhelm von Humboldt, a seldom-noticed source. Paralleling von Humboldt's use of musical metaphors, Rawls depicts overlapping consensus as a symphony orchestra. With its three-part movement from harmonic stability (exposition) through instability (development) again to stability (recapitulation), the symphony has been described as a musical *Bildungsroman*. Whether conducted by Adam Smith's invisible hand or Arturo Toscanini's legendary baton, the orchestra reconciles individual freedom with social responsibility. Although a shared sense of justice moves Rawls's citizens, they play a formal, instrumental, and, some argue, a highly-rationalized and textually-based music. I conclude by comparing two symphonies, a UNESCO-funded system of youth orchestras in South America dedicated to civic education through classical music, and the more democratic ethos of "PauWau: A Gathering of Nations," by the indigenous composer, Brent Michael Davids.

Unlike symphonic form, which to a great extent mirrors liberal justice, the music of social movements reveals and releases new energies from a resonant civil society. I turn to musical practices of the feminist and civil rights movements as models for a more radical democracy. In chapter four, I examine how lesbian-feminist music (euphemistically, "women's music") exemplifies the transformative power of vocal sound. I emphasize the music of Holly Near, political artist, cultural worker, and founder of Redwood Records. With her music, Near pushes the boundaries of linguistic consciousness and, with it, political discourse. She describes music as "poet's code," as a way "to speak the truth without saying the words" (1985, 76). When Near, an out-lesbian, sings heterosexual love songs she unsettles established identities. She also promotes the formation of coalitions between the members of her diverse audiences. Her performances engage listeners as participants and encourage a responsive and responsible citizenry. Near's feminist commitments—non-essentialism, consciousness-raising, empowerment, and coalition-work—are familiar ones. What is new is their musical meaning as sound in motion. When injustices

originate in a body or, more precisely, an anti-body aesthetic, “women’s music” that taps into the e/motions of civil society can promote democratic change.

The body aesthetic of Western reason associates oppressed groups more closely with spiritual and/or material forces, and it stigmatizes both as premodern, regressive, and primitive. Simply put, modern, secular, Western, public discourse lacks soul (Caraway 1991). In chapter five, I explore how civil rights music or freedom songs simultaneously express the horrors of racial slavery and the spirit of democratic community. My focus is the cultural politics of Sweet Honey in the Rock, an a cappella ensemble of five African-American women, based in Washington, DC, founded by Bernice Johnson Reagon, one of the original SNCC Freedom Singers. Moving beyond (white) feminist claims that “the personal is political,” Reagon writes, “I think everything is political. We are about being accountable” (quoted in Caraway 1991, 178). African-American song traditions exemplify what Martin Luther King called the “soul-force” of democracy. When leaders “raise a song” they invite others to take it up, to assume responsibility for their actions, to participate in the living history of a people. This call-and-response mode combines individuality and community, spontaneity and structure, and mirrors radical democratic processes. These features of African-American singing open up the self, creating a more expansive individual. To paraphrase Cordell Reagon, music changes individuals, who can then change governments (quoted in Seeger and Reiser 1989, 85).

In chapter six, I return to the relationships between music and democracy and, more broadly, aesthetics and politics, with which I began. Habermas and Rawls, I argue, fail to fully realize the democratic potential expressed in their own musical metaphors. They confine embodied voices to the spaces of private life and individual autonomy—the liberal boundaries of democratic politics. The sounds of citizens’ voices enter their public discourse only after translation into a public text, at best, animated by “symphonic justice.” Musical practices of the feminist and civil-rights movements model a more radical, one might say, a more musical democracy. Drawing on

the insights of activist musicians, I conclude by outlining some of its crucial features. Most important, the musical democracy, whose features I describe, promotes the ongoing creation of expansive individuals, citizens capable of performing democracy in public spaces open to any and all expressions of voice.