

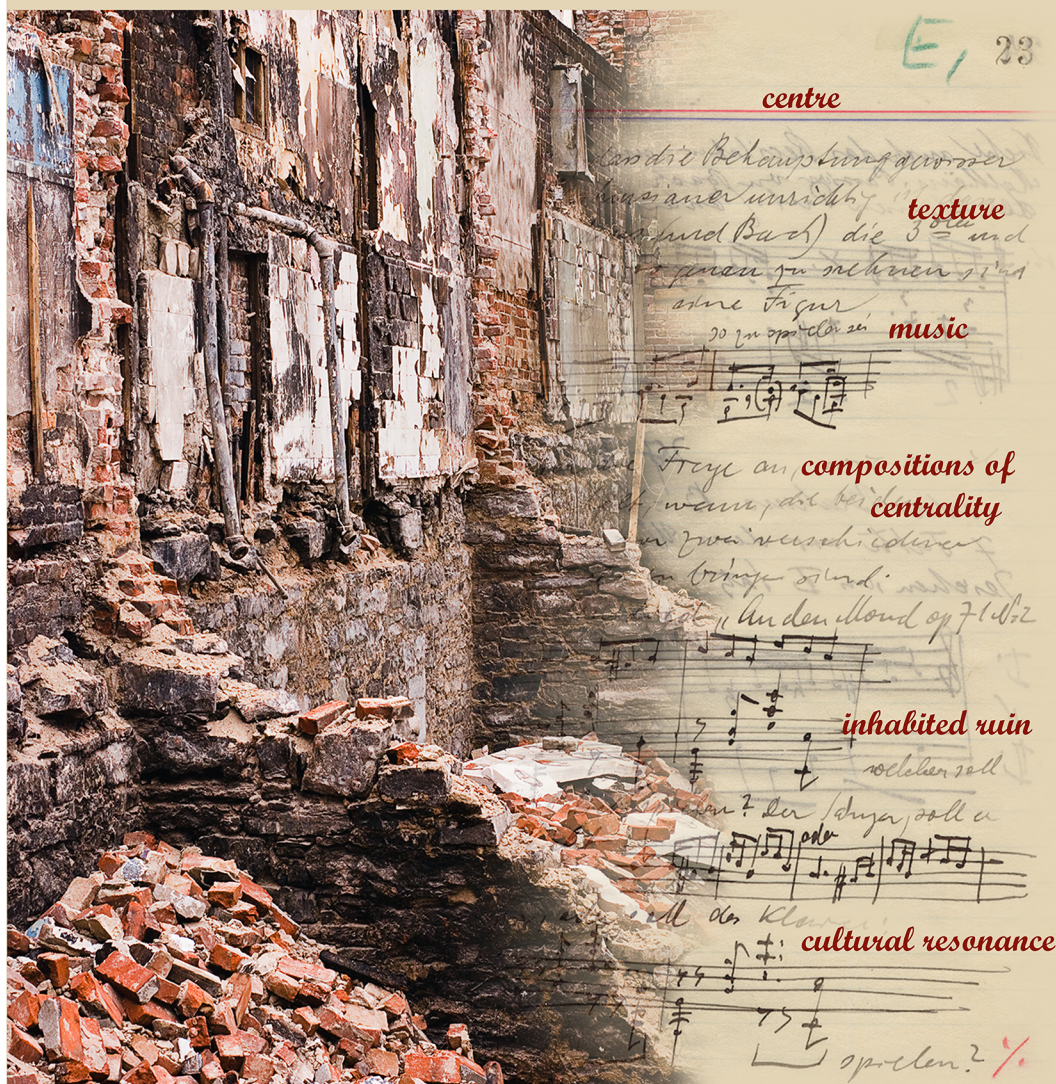
The Ruins of *Mittleuropa*: an Investigation into the Cultural Blueprints of the Centre

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“Within a tune, a process is hidden through which we all live” (Leoš Janáček).



“Music, therefore, is a social act not an individual one” (Béla Bartók).

The proposed course of research looks at the Central European context from the perspective of its recent cultural history (around 1900 until the present). The goal is to derive a paradigm of identity construction that can be effectively applied to help assess the current state of the European project of integration. The idea, methodologically speaking, behind such a focus then and now, is to learn something about a moment of history by thinking about a sample of its music and artistic culture in general.

The overarching research question of this project is the following: In a new Europe without the traditionally instituted centres of power and culture (such as Paris, London, Vienna, etc.) how can any sense of integration play itself out?

The essential aspect of building a new reality of integration also involves the re-invention, or at least a re-vision of Europe's focal point. It is this indecisiveness or hesitation as far as Europe's mobile Centre is concerned that in the end, and in a self-contradictory fashion, might prove to be the most stable, democratic and enduring aspect of Europe's self-image. In other words, Europe's image to a large extent seems to be comprised of this contradictorily coherent aspect of centrality, of a European cohesion which always has its centre elsewhere. It is this type of cultural politics of the centre that I investigate within the framework of the Newton Fellowship.