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**Music and the Wor(l)d – Musicology and Mankind
How we Got Out of Analysis, and How to Get Back In**

By Lars Berglund and Eyolf Østrem

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Music and the Wor(l)d – Musicology and Mankind

How we Got Out of Analysis, and How to Get Back In

Av Lars Berglund & Eyolf Østrem

In this article we discuss various aspects of the discipline of musicology, particularly in Scandinavia: the notion of its broad subject matter, its strong dependency on other disciplines and what we conceive of as a lack of theoretical foundation proper to the discipline itself.

Despite the broad scope of the discipline, we argue that what is unique for musicology is the analysis and interpretation of music. The elaboration of this basic proposition involves a sketch of a theory of musical meaning, and a reevaluation of the distinction between 'functional' and 'aesthetic' music.

Musicology Today

'Musicology beyond 1999 – by who, for whom, about what and by which methods', was the thought-provoking title of the colloquium arranged by the Department of musicology, Göteborg University, in August 1999. To concretize the questions, we took a look at how the discipline presents itself today. The musicology department at the University of Oslo gives this description of themselves and their object of study:

Music in some form or another is an element of all known cultures, and in our time mass media have given music a scope and an impact like no other art form. The breadth of musical life reveals itself, among other things, through very different [uensartede] musical forms of expression and subcultures, from genres where the aesthetic qualities represent the dominant value scale, to genres where function and use perhaps mean more.¹

This description continues with an enumeration of what musicology is supposed to do with the material: 'Musicology aims at an increased knowledge about and a deeper understanding of the development, particularities and functions of music in

1. 'Musikk i en eller annen form inngår i alle kjente kulturer, og i vår tid har massemedia gitt musikken en rekkevidde og gjennomslagskraft som knapt noen annen kunstart. Bredden i musikklivet kommer bl.a. til uttrykk gjennom svært uensartede musikalske uttrykksformer og delkulturer, fra generer der de estetiske kvalitetene representerer den overordnede verdiskalaen til generer der funksjon og bruksmåte kanskje betyr mer' (<http://www.uio.no/sthb/hf/hfstudpler/musikk/2232.html>).

different cultures in a national, European and global context. Music history, work analysis, theoretical and practical counterpoint, ear-training and interpretation are central areas in the discipline.'

This description reveals several things about the discipline of musicology that are applicable not only to this one department. The first point that emerges, from the two parts of the description taken together, is that musicology is a field primarily defined by its *material*, and that this material is conceived of as very *vast*. Similar expressions can be found in most descriptions of this kind, but the department of musicology in Regensburg states it most clearly: 'Alles Wissen um die Musik und alle die Musik betreffenden historischen, geisteswissenschaftlichen wie auch theoretischen Fragestellungen gehören zur Musikwissenschaft.'² All possible knowledge about music and about any conceivable question related to music – that is not a small field to be covered by a small-to-medium-sized discipline at the perimeter of the humanities.

Furthermore, the vastness of the material is also taken to imply a *diversity in fundamental principles and forms* ('music in some form or another', 'very different musical forms of expression'). The Norwegian word 'uensartet' in the quotation even implies a difference *in kind*, to the degree that different kinds of music may not be describable within the same explanatory system. If this were the case, it would be impossible to find a common theoretical ground for the study of these different kinds of music. One of the consequences of this is the heavy dependency on the theoretical legacy from other disciplines, and the constant struggle with their theoretical conditions to reconcile them with the oddness of music.

Last, but not least, the Norwegian description reflects the widespread stance that there is a more or less dichotomous opposition between *aesthetics* and *function*, concerning genres and perspectives – *what* can be analysed in *which* music. In some genres 'aesthetic qualities represent the dominant value scale', whereas there are other 'genres where function and use perhaps mean more'. This last expression can be read as a euphemistic rephrasing of genres where formalistic analysis of the music with regard to aesthetic perspectives is disregarded, in favour of a study of how the music is used and how it functions (religiously, sociologically, in the cult etc.).

This invites a series of questions concerning the concept of aesthetics. Does 'the aesthetic qualities' exclude, e.g., the ability of certain music to make one want to dance? And conversely: can the function of a certain music in a certain context – given that the relation between music and function is not completely random – be explained at all, without recourse to a conceptual system where traits of the music are related to the function it is supposed to fulfill and the world view of which they both are part?

2. http://www.uni-regensburg.de/Fakultaeten/phil_Fak_I/Musikwissenschaft/vade/vademecum1998.htm.

Musicology – an Academical Onion

The wide range of materials and topics studied, the many different areas towards which the study is directed, and the reluctance towards theorizing about the fundamentals of the discipline as a whole, largely based on the assumption of the diversity in kind between different musics – all this has given us a discipline which encompasses ethnology, sociology, psychology, as well as aesthetics, culture theory, and history, but which like Peer Gynt's onion lacks a kernel, a *self*.

This may be too negative a description of musicology, but it concurs with two tendencies that can be discerned in the discipline over the past two decades, i.e. since Kerman & Co. dealt their blows against traditional work analysis and style history. One is the tradition they attacked, which, despite the force of the blows, nevertheless lives on – the other is the vacuum left by their blow. Kerman's criticism of the historical evolutionism, of the 'orthodox belief ... in the overriding aesthetic value of the instrumental music of the great German tradition' (Kerman 1980 p. 314), and the implicit aesthetic assumptions underlying the project of the style historians as well as the established methods of music analysis (e.g. about unity and coherence, i.e. the 'organicism' of art works), were undoubtedly well founded, and much needed. But it seems that the entire trust in the possibility of including music analysis as an integrated part of a sociology or history of music went out like the baby with the bath water.³ So when the commonly accepted step-by-step methods of analysis, represented by handbooks for undergraduates fell into distrust, many musicologists seem to have contented themselves with general descriptions of pieces, as mere illustrations accompanying the historical or ethnographical narrative.⁴

One of the victims of this battle has been the concept of *style*. This is not altogether unmerited; it *is* a concept burdened with all the skeletons listed above, as well as several others. Nevertheless we believe it may still prove to be a useful concept, which can be used without necessarily dragging behind it all its former glory. We will return to this towards the end of the paper.

Another such tendency is what has been hinted at above: that musicologists have contented themselves with limiting their study to what would normally fall under one of the 'auxiliary disciplines', but without necessarily taking into consideration the demands on a specialized theoretical competence within these disciplines. Using

3. See e.g. Agawu 1996 for a survey of the fate of analysis 'post Kerman', especially in American musicology.

4. On the other hand one could argue that these easily taught, ready-made, step-by-step analytical methods were never intended to be anything but a way for students – as well as scholars – precisely to be spared the painful task of actually theorizing about what one is doing. There is a certain irony in the fact that the term 'music theory' is associated with the most crossword-like part of musicology – formalistic analysis of whichever kind – which can be practised without the slightest awareness of the theoretical foundations of the activity (this is of course not to say that all theorists are theoretically unaware).

a musical material does not free anyone from these demands – one might even say: to the contrary. Music historians must be just as conscious about the aporetic nature of time and the past as any other historian – they must furthermore be conscious about the aporetic nature of time *in relation to music*, which makes their task even more complex.

Just knowing the basic rules of source criticism, being able to rattle off 50 archive codes from memory and having a source material that is 200 years old, obviously does not make anyone a historian, anymore than speaking bantu fluently and owning a set of genuine gamelan gongs makes anyone an anthropologist. Rather it is the *questions, theories and methods* specific to a certain disciplinary tradition – the means and ends for which the sources are being used – that makes someone a sociologist, psychologist, or a historian. A sociologist who studies youth culture, will naturally consider music as one element of this, but if his questions deal with socialization processes, the meaning and internal structure of the music itself will be irrelevant. In short: writing about *music* is not an excuse for theoretical sloppiness about history, ethnology, sociology or any other discipline.

That is not to say that the internal structure of the music itself could not make an interesting study in its own right, and this is a sword that can be directed against musicology: that a perspective on music as about music in all its multifarious, elusive incarnations, easily becomes an excuse for theoretical sloppiness about *music itself*. This may manifest itself on the one hand in scholars who avoid any closer examining of music at all, sticking to the safe ground or extra-musical empirical facts, or on the other, in formalistic analysis of musical works, without any clear aim, and with 'ready-made' methods of analysis taken over without any deeper knowledge of, or even reflection upon, the theoretical foundation of the method used.

Musicology on its Own?

If we accept the thesis that any academic discipline should be guided by a perspective of its own on the world or some part of it, and not only by the material, what would this theoretical perspective be in the case of musicology? What remains as specifically 'musicological' if musicology is peeled of its many 'auxiliary disciplines'? Or to turn it into a positive question: What is it about the study of music that calls for a special competence that necessitates musicology – what can we do, that others cannot, or cannot do better?

The short answer is: music analysis and musical aesthetics. That is to say a competence to handle musical artefacts⁵ directly, to describe them, using the terminology and methodology developed within what (somewhat undeservedly) goes by the name of music theory, and develop new terminologies to meet new needs, and to interpret the artefacts against this background and in accordance with the theoretical

and methodological foundation underlying the questions one seeks to answer. Further it means to treat questions where an understanding of musical artefacts in relation to wider conceptual, epistemological systems – how people in different cultures at different times have thought about and understood music and its place(s) in the world – is essential.

A short answer is usually attractive but deceptive, and so is this one. We will spend the rest of the paper to elaborate on the model and on certain problems connected to it. First of all the concentration on analysis should not be taken as a plea for strictly internalistic (formalistic) exegesis of intra-musical structures without regard for history or society, culture or ideas; it is not to say that everyone should deal with Schenker-analysis or set-theory, nor that all music must be studied internalistically, and forced into a work-aesthetics. Laying out the structure of a Mozart sonata or determining the tone material of a Schönberg quartet can only be a *means* towards an *interpretation* in response to a specific *question*, which ultimately will deal with the aesthetic reaction to the piece. Such questions can be raised to all music, regardless of genre, style, 'high' or 'low', 'popular' or 'serious', 'folk' or 'classical'. Hence, it is not these categories, but the questions posed, that decide whether a study is 'musicological' or would be better served with the tools and thoughts from another discipline.

What it *is*, is a plea for a fundamental theoretical competence among all musicologists, including those who are not primarily oriented towards analysis or aesthetics. To quote a French cook: 'Il faut mettre les mains dans le pain.' To bake croissants one needs a recipe (method) and an understanding of taste and use (aesthetic theory) – but sooner or later one will inevitably have to take the deep plunge into the dough with both hands.

A more fundamental problem is connected with the question: do we *want* musicology to stand on its own, and is it even *possible*? We would like to sketch two different but interrelated answers to this. One is ideological, concerning the *raison d'être* of the humanities. The other is philosophical, concerning the concept of meaning and the possibility of discursive meaning in music.

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5. We use the term 'artefact' to avoid the rich but cumbersome load of connotations that comes with terms like 'musical work'. The term covers music both in sounding and notated form, it emphasizes the making rather than the object character, thus taking in the important notion that artefacts are made or presented by human beings (thus excluding natural beauty). It further embraces the ancient concept of art (a skill based on the knowledge of certain rules), without excluding the modern. In sum: it makes the relation between the artefact and aesthetics and art character less determined than the work concept, but without denying the relation.

Musicology as a Humanistic Discipline

The task of the humanities can metaphorically be described as being the *memory and critical mirror of mankind*.⁶ The knowledge that is being produced within the humanities – including musicology – should ultimately serve this double purpose. The mirror reflects an image of the beholder – it lets us see who we are. But the *critical* mirror does not merely passively reflect, it takes an active part in the formation of the picture. This places it in the same category as the queen's mirror on the wall: what it has to say, may not always be pleasant.

The role of the critical mirror should be related to the original significance of the word *humaniora* – its latin root *humanior* means 'more human'. The most fundamental role of the humanities is not to dig out empirical facts, but to put these facts together in such a way as to let us form a picture of who we are, and against this background grow as human beings, through an increased understanding of humanity and human actions. This places the humanities in a double position: belonging both to the humanistic and the scholarly. Its ultimate goals are connected with edification and realization of human potential, but by way of scholarly knowledge.

This entails a fundamental belief that the *humanities* constitutes a comprehensive system of thought, ideas, and perspectives, and that the disciplinary boundaries in a certain respect are casual divisions of labour within this large field. Unnecessary distinctions should not be made within this field – the point is not that musicologists should not deal with history, since that is the historians' specialty, but that in doing so, they should be aware of the specialized discussions that take place within the field of history – its disciplinary tradition and the problems and possibilities within this tradition.

The role of memory in the double metaphor above can be seen in the same perspective, as to serve the formation of concepts, collective and individual.⁷ Due to the collective character of language, every concept will have a collective dimension, on a basic level. Furthermore, most concepts are also related to *interaction between people*, and can therefore only be invested with meaning in relation to a larger group of people – a society, with sociocultural practices within this society, and with history as the society's collective memory.

On the individual level, every individual in the society will have to appropriate this common conceptual basis and balance it against one's own individual memory. To serve this double process – and not to serve as conversation subject matter for the bourgeoisie, a game of Trivial Pursuit among overgrown infants – should be the motivation for the edifying aspect of the humanities, as a prolongation of the socialization process in childhood.

6. The phrase is borrowed from Bo Sundquist, principal of Uppsala University.

7. This can be related to Aristotle's categorization of memory together with the senses as suppliers of material for the intellect (*De memoria et reminiscencia* 1).

In this allegedly very broad perspective, the aim of musicology is to *produce (and transmit) scholarly knowledge about music as an instance of human culture*. This implies firstly that musicological knowledge should be inscribed in the overall framework for knowledge and scholarliness in general and for the humanities in particular; secondly that it should study music in the light of its sociocultural and aesthetic context. To do this, it must relate itself to the entire field of the humanities, but be guided by its own perspective on the world or some part of it, and not only by the material. But what kind of knowledge can music analysis bring about, and how? How can the study of musical artefacts be made to comply with the ideals of musicology as a humanistic discipline? In which way will the study of music influence our image of who we are and let us grow as human beings through an increased understanding of humanity and human actions?

Music Analysis and the World

As a program for musicology this means that the information that the strictly musicological treatment of the material can offer should be combined with a general 'humanistic' knowledge whether historical, culture-theoretical or some other kind. This is certainly an appealing aim, but the problem remains, how to unite these two types of information – how to unite the *work* and the *world* in the same discussion without violating either of them.

A central issue here is the question about musical meaning. The bottom line is – as it has been for as long as there has been systematic thinking about music – the notion that music is not a language, it is rather a syntax without a semantical and conceptual level. In a very general sense, music is clearly meaningful, it can be understood, it may even have the ability to express something. On the other hand it may not be capable of *saying* something, or as Theodor Adorno puts it: 'Time and again [music] points to the fact that it signifies something, something definite. Only the intention is always veiled' (Adorno 1993 p. 402).

Phrased differently, music is the cultural production that comes closest to language both in medium – sound – and in the complexity of meaning structure, yet at the same time the one that least obviously can make claims on a *conceptual* level of meaning. The meaning is veiled in the same way as the meaning of an utterance in a language that one does not understand is veiled: there seems to be a meaning there, but it is hidden. The veiling takes place because an interpretation of the object (the music) is attempted, using a wrong (although related) set of criteria for meaning creation.

In this perspective, the road from musical meaning to the meaning of the world is long and laborious – if there is such a road at all. In recent years, attempts have been made to follow it, most notably by a number of American scholars, such as Lawrence

Kramer, Susan McClary and Rose Subotnik, just to mention a few of the more prominent. In the tradition represented by these and other scholars, insightful analyses and re-interpretations of central works and aesthetic concepts have been made, but the accusation can be made, that these insights have been reached by way of a short-cut from musical meaning to meaning on a semantical level; it is one thing to state that Beethoven's two-movement sonatas are an expression of the 'utopia of romantic aesthetics' and a structural trope called 'expressive doubling' (Kramer 1990 p. 21–71), or that his ninth symphony expresses a sexual power structure comparable to that of violent rape (McClary 1991); it is another thing to tie such conclusions to the actual musical contents of the pieces themselves. We will argue that such insights may very well be drawn, but that there is always the temptation of the short-cut, which on a theoretical level creates more problems than it solves. The theoretical reflections that follow are an attempt to describe the long way.

Style and Meaning

If we exclude the cases where meaning is applied to a piece of music from the outside through a text or a program, i.e. with recourse to language, a discussion of meaning in music is hardly possible without the background of a larger musical referential system – expectations, norms, techniques etc. which is covered fairly well by the concept of *style*. In the model proposed here, this constitutes the first and fundamental level of analysis: a description of traits of the musical artefact in relation to conventions of composition or performance that are relevant for the genre in question. 'Style' is here used in a way that refers to purely intra-musical phenomena. To be meaningful outside of this level, in a way that can be related to the humanistic ideal proposed above, and where 'worldliness' becomes accessible as a reference, the stylistic meaning must be related to a wider system of meaning, which we, for lack of a better term, call 'aesthetic'. We will return to this relation, after an elaboration of the stylistic level of meaning.

Firstly, we apply a *structural* concept of meaning to musical artefacts. The main advantage of this approach is that we get one possible way of describing the peculiarities of the process of creation of musical meaning, without having to draw on either the question of *semantic significance*, or of *function*, *value* or *intention*.

A structure normally denotes the relations between the parts of a whole, and/or between the whole and the constituent parts of the whole, so that it is:

impossible to discern a structure if not either the whole, or a certain number of principles, rules or laws that taken together determine the relations between its parts, are previously known. A reference to the structural meaning of a phenomenon hence refers either to the previously known relations that the phenomenon has to other phenomena, or to its (not previously known) relations to the other elements in a

previously known whole, or to the phenomenon's relations to such a known whole.
(Translated from Dahlstedt 1990 p. 128).

In other words: To understand the relations that constitute the structure, one needs to know the principles that determine them, either by reference to other phenomena or to other elements of the whole.

Secondly, we agree with modern meaning theory in the legacy of Wittgenstein that the question of meaning is in effect a question of *understanding* – that the question of the 'meaning of an expression ... must be construed as a thesis of what it is to *know* its meaning' (Dummett 1976 p. 69). This perspective allows us to bring in Wittgenstein's language philosophy as an illuminating parallel to the workings of musical meaning: an open-ended system of rules and practices, which can be learnt by heart (internalized), without the need of explicit knowledge of the governing rules, leading to a non-conceptual, immediate musical understanding. This implies that just as understanding a language depends on practical knowledge of – or rather, practical skills in – the language and the use of its various elements in different situations, understanding music depends upon musical skills of a similar kind.⁸ And just as these rules and practises in a language can be abstracted into a grammar, in the same manner the stylistic norms of music can be abstracted. And just as a grammar can never in itself bring about understanding of a language, only point to the features that are essential for understanding, the same is true of musical style.

The analogy with grammar can be taken one step further: a grammar will never take in *all* aspects of *all* languages, and likewise a concept of style along these lines cannot be limited to any definite number of criteria or application areas – it consists of an open-ended system that can never be more than an abstract construction, a model. Talking, for instance, about genre style, is to make a practical, manageable selection of criteria out of a system of criteria that in principle is open.

Stylistic systems can be applicable on different levels, spanning from work style and motivic elaborations within a specific work, via person, genre and epoch styles, to near-universal stylistic norms within a larger cultural entity. Some of these near-universals are so fundamental that it may be difficult to distinguish the stylistic level from elements that have a physical or biological background (e.g. the pairs up-down, fast-slow, loud-silent, even the physical foundation of the tonal system).

These levels are hierarchical. On a high level, consisting of a whole cultural sphere over a long period of time, one may have a common referential system (harmonically, rhythmically), which explains how an 'inexperienced' listener from a totally different musical subculture (like rock music) can still discover and appreciate Beethoven's Fifth without having heard a single tone of classical music, i.e. without

8. The reference to musical skill is meant neither as a limitation to experts nor to practising musicians – it should be taken to mean any skill that is relevant in dealing with music, in listening, playing, analysing etc. A punk rocker will definitely be a more skilled listener to the Ramones than most German musicologists (even Dahlhaus).

knowing the stylistic references of the work on lower levels (Viennese instrumental music, Beethoven's music in general, Beethoven's orchestral music).

The closer one gets to the near-universals, the easier it is to translate to a conceptual level, but at the same time the conclusions one can draw become more and more general and less and less applicable to specific pieces. A discussion of something as general as tension in music can easily be related to a wider concept of tension (see McClary 1991), whereas a specific motive in a Chopin prelude has a much longer way to go to be related to anything extra-musical (Chopin's melodic style in general, romanticist expressive style, harmonic development, instrumental idiom, the conditions under which the piece was composed, etc.).

To understand a piece of music will be impossible without reference to other music, to similarities with and differences from other music, that is to say stylistic considerations. Musical meaning, according to this understanding of style, is a non-conceptual, structural meaning, generated in the interplay between the work and the stylistic norms the work is considered in relation to. Which these norms are, whether the composer's, the listener's or any other, is left open – at least in the sense that the model does not prescribe any of them. Thus it is just as applicable to monographies of composers as to reception history. The decision about which norms to include, will in fact be an important element in the interpretative process.

This is a way of describing musical meaning that comes close to the generalized description of the hermeneutical approach to interpretation of a text: that a text can only be insufficiently understood *in itself*, it must be supplemented by something outside itself, or rather, that there is no such thing as a text *in itself*, since an external context will always be present in the text, if only because the words that constitute the text carry with them meaning that is derived from their use. This should be seen in opposition for instance to the New Criticism and its musical relatives. One of the important lessons to be learned from the hermeneutical approach, is that the system of style presupposes a framework of ideas, a music view.

The line of argument concerning language can be transferred to music, if we allow the analogy between the words of language and the various stylistic gestures of music as basic units of meaning creation. In both cases it is necessary – for the understanding of this meaning to be anything more than a solipsistic exercise, in other words to obtain a correspondence of understanding between different individuals – that the understanding is based on a wider context and on sociocultural praxis.

So even though the concept of style is problematic because of its association with the historical evolutionism of Guido Adler and others, it is at the same time the concept that comes closest to covering the immediate 'horizon of understanding' within which musical meaning is produced, as described above. We consider it a useful term, as long as it is given a wide definition, and not limited to the burdened concept of style within style history, or style analyses based on inductive methods.

Meaning and Aesthetics

We have in the foregoing discussion pointed out the difference between the structural, nonconceptual meaning of music and the semantic meaning of words and language. What remains is to bring them together again.

Just as the details concerning the use of words are rarely the final aim of a meeting with a text, the meaning of a piece of music will generally be searched also on other levels than the purely structural. John Barth, in his novel *End of the Road*, lets his hero exclaim:

Articulation! [...] To turn experience into speech [...] is always a betrayal of experience, a falsification of it; but only so betrayed can it be dealt with at all, and only in so dealing with it did I ever feel a man alive and kicking (quoted from Meyer 1973 p. 5).

This can be read as a concession that *experience* is rarely the ultimate aim in dealing with music: one will usually search to connect the experience to one's life and world in some way or another – to feel alive and kicking.

For music to make sense, it takes a conceptualization of it, and the basis for this conceptualization is style. This would mean that even in the narrowest concentration on stylistic features in a specific work, the connection to an aesthetic system is unavoidable. We take 'aesthetic system' to denote the system of meaning by which sensual stimuli ('*aisthesis*') and their organization, i.e. nonconceptual, intra-musical meaning on the stylistic level is connected with a *conceptual* (or conceptualizable) system of meaning and function.⁹

Exactly *how* this connection is brought about, can be very open, for many reasons. One is that the stylistic meaning is an interpreted material in an open-ended system. Hence it cannot either serve as a foundation for anything like truth-claims, only as a starting-point for a further analysis. Another is that we are dealing with different concepts of meaning on the different levels. Whereas the stylistic meaning is of a structural kind, the meaning on the aesthetic level can be of all the other kinds that were excluded in the discussion of stylistic meaning: intentional, functional, ideological, semantical.

Just as the meaning of an artefact may be of different kinds on different levels, so will the *connection* between the different levels of meaning. For the model to work, one must be able to point to features which unite the different meanings. The simplest version of this is where a specific stylistic trait is ascribed a specific referential

9. An important point is that these levels are interdependent. The sonority *g-b-d-f* in sixteenth-century music will never in itself be anything but a slightly unusual dissonance; beyond this it will only be significant when related to other analogous phenomena and relationships, in other areas than the purely musical. Conversely, the potential aesthetic meaning of such a sonority depends upon its place in the stylistic system in which the sonority is found: the expectations upon such a chord in 1597 are drastically different from those upon the same chord used in a Tin Pan Alley tune, and so will the potential meaning that can be put into the sonority.

meaning, such as is the case of madrigalisms. In most cases this relation is based on a certain *similarity* or *analogy* between the musical gesture and some feature in the outside world, either of a direct kind (as when a movement upwards is taken to refer to 'going up' or to heaven), or more indirectly, when for instance dance rhythms are taken to refer to 'joy' or when a descending half-step means sighing. The ascription of meaning can also be of a more accidental kind, only based on the gesture's place in a historical development, such as the mourning character of fauxbourdon in the Italian sixteenth-century madrigal, as opposed to its neutral character as merely a counterpoint technique in the previous century, or even a completely random connection between a gesture and a content, postulated by a composer, such as in Wagner's *Leitmotiv*-technique.

A number of such ways can be listed in which a nonconceptual, but meaningful musical gesture is given a conceptual meaning by some kind of reference to something in the outside world, but any such listing will only serve as examples. The important point is that as long as we are dealing with different concepts of meaning, they may not translate directly to one another – the transition from one meaning to the other must be traced carefully. This means that this kind of connection can only be made against the background of a thorough knowledge – practical and theoretical – about the music in question, and a critical interpretation (and reinterpretation) of it. The farther one wishes to remove oneself from the intra-musical level, the stronger the demands should be on the explicitness of the interpretations and of their theoretical background – on the breadth, but also on the conciseness and precision of the horizon of understanding. An explicit aesthetic theory will only be *one* part of this meaning system, albeit an important one.

Through this chain of meanings, by which music view is connected with world view in a conceptual, epistemological system, can musical artefacts also be connected with the world, but we see no shorter way. Musicologists, then, should perhaps concentrate more on improving and widening this road, instead of making futile attempts to penetrate the thickets at the roadside in search of a short-cut.

It may be useful to point out also what we *do not* mean when we say that music should be regarded in the light of an aesthetic system, namely that music should always be related to a normative notion of art, and thus judged according to the traditional, hierarchical canon of art works, with the German, 200-years-old masterpieces at the top, and trivial pop music at the bottom. This is a notion that is still implicit in much mainstream musicology, but it is not the only possible way of 'aestheticizing' music, nor is it even necessarily an obvious way to treat music from the classic-romantic era, for more than one reason: the concept of art, which lies at the bottom of this notion, is itself historically relative, and although the classic-romantic concept of art *has been* definitional, in musicology as well as in the concert hall, this status has been dissolved by modern art and aesthetics. The relation between the music and its context is no longer the same, so that an analysis which aestheticizes

against the background of a particular institutional framework (i.e. the concert hall), will not only exclude larger parts of the musical world, it will also fail to note that even 'concert hall music' is today mostly used in a completely different way than it was when its aesthetic framework (and *raison d'être*) was developed.

The predominance of the classic-romantic art music paradigm in musicology, may be seen as one of the reasons why the notion of *functional* music has been so important – as an opposite alternative to the 'aesthetically interesting' music, i.e., the dichotomy mirrored in the description in the Oslo web-page quoted in the introduction.

The distinction between functional and 'aesthetic' music is based upon a narrow understanding of what is aesthetically interesting, and how, and an equally narrow understanding of functional music: that the predominance of the function makes the relation between a piece and its stylistic context unimportant. This makes it dubious from both perspectives: on the one hand, because all music, even strictly 'functional', can be analysed with respect to its stylistic qualities, on the other, because even a strictly aesthetic appreciation, in the 'concert-hall' sense, of a Beethoven symphony is in fact the fulfillment of a sociocultural function. The aesthetic success of a musical work depends upon its ability to fulfill this function. 'Aptness for contemplation', harmonic complexity or formal perfection, are no more or no less functional qualities than 'aptness for dancing'. We therefore see it as more fruitful to let the distinction be one between different aesthetic systems, rather than between an aesthetic approach on the one hand and other possible approaches (like the functional) on the other.

In practice this means that a traditional study of classical music will most likely gain from a functional perspective, just as regarding the stylistic and aesthetic aspects of 'functional' music gives ample ground for interesting analysis. One may even say that a thorough traditional harmonical analysis of Bob Dylan's music is more interesting than yet another Beethoven study, because it poses new problems and invites us to look upon the world with new eyes. Eric Clapton once said about Bob Dylan: 'His way of playing anything is totally hybrid. It does not make sense musically to the scholar. ... At first listening, everything he does is just real hopeless. Then you look back and realise it's exactly right'. As scholars we should take this as a challenge. If something is 'exactly right', but still does not make sense to the scholar, it is either the scholar's sense or the scholar's analytical tools that are inadequate. We take the liberty of disregarding the first possibility, although that is probably the commonest cause for scholarly not-being-made-sense-to-ness. Instead we should find tools to fit the material (the old wrench may even fit). Even though Schenker theory may not be very useful in a study of Norwegian Hardanger fiddle playing, this is no excuse for not searching for ways to analyse this music, both regarding style and aesthetics, in the broad sense.

What has been presented here, should not be regarded as a normative methodology to be followed by all musicologists in every study. Neither is it the only way of gaining important insight into music. Since the model for stylistic meaning is an open model, depending heavily on the context in which one chooses to see the artefact, it will never be able to produce exact answers to the question 'What does this music mean?' anymore than the most extravagantly over-interpretative exegeses. The aim of the model is to be clarifying: whenever claims about meaning in music are made, these are founded on connections of the kinds we have pointed out, whether this is conscious or not. It is our conviction that a conscious process leads to a clearer and more distinct result than an unconscious one.

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