

The Felt World: Musical Experience, Emotion, and Meaning

"Music is a simultaneous and a successive-ness of tone and tone-combinations, which are so organized that its impression on the ear is agreeable, and its impression on the intelligence is comprehensible; and that these impressions have the power to influence occult parts of our soul and of our sentimental spheres and that this influence makes us live in a dreamland of fulfilled desires, or in a dreaded hell of . . . etc., etc. . . ."

- Arnold Schoenberg

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Section I: Prelude

The composer Arnold Schoenberg's sentiment expresses the difficulty of attempting to characterize music and its relationship to mankind. Like all works of art, a musical work is fashioned out of physical material—vibrations in some sort of medium. Yet tones are by no means explicit. Unless accompanied by words, problems emerge when attempting to characterize the purpose behind a piece of music, if any exist in the first place. Unlike most paintings, sculptures, or poems, the subjects of musical works are not always clear. Despite this, these seemingly inarticulate combinations of vibrations make up a significant portion of human culture and activity. Nearly all cultures have had some form of music, and the overwhelming majority of persons enjoy some type of it. Indeed, music seems to be a fundamental aspect of human experience. What, however, is the nature of this musical experience? Schoenberg describes music's impression on both the "intelligence" and the "soul," affirming a traditional dichotomy between thinking and feeling, knowledge and emotion. This, after all, seems to be a primary problem when describing musical experience. Is music known through the intellect, or felt through the senses, even the soul? In other words, does the cognitive understanding of music or the emotional feeling dominate musical experience? Or, perhaps more importantly, does a **Derrick Barksdale** express emotions, move the

¹ Josiah Eld, ed., *Composers on Music: Eight Centuries of Writings*, Boston: Northeastern University Press, (1997), p. 219

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Section I: Prelude

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¹ Josiah Fisk, ed., *Composers on Music: Eight Centuries of Writings*, Boston: Northeastern University Press, (1997), p. 239

listener in the first place? Another way of asking this question is: what about musical experience is meaningful?

I will argue that musical experience does consist of emotional, felt experiences, and that these experiences constitute a meaningful musical experience. Moreover, these emotional experiences need not be divorced from intellectual understandings of music. Finally, musical experience will be argued to be constructed of non-musical stimuli as well: our memory, and the disposition and mood we are in when perceiving the musical stimulus. Ultimately, I will argue that emotion need not be at odds with formal, musical process, or a cognitive understanding of music.

First, Leonard B. Meyer's account of the process of emotional arousal will be described through a discussion of expectations of particular musical tendencies in stylistic frameworks. Next, support will be provided for Meyer's view by Deryck Cooke, who argues that the fundamental elements of music have been used in many of the same means throughout history. Finally, Arthur Schopenhauer's views of the metaphysics of music will be related to these more contemporary accounts of musical emotion.

Section II: Meyer and the Arousal Theory of Emotions

Two problems often emerge when dealing with the relationship between emotion and meaning in music. The "depiction" problem questions whether or not a piece of music depicts or denotes anything, in the sense that it refers to something beyond itself. The *absolutist* holds that music depicts nothing, and musical meaning lies "exclusively within the context of the work itself, in the perception of the relationships set forth within the musical work of art."² The *referentialist*, on the other hand, grants this cognitive

² Leonard B. Meyer, *Emotion and Meaning in Music*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956, p. 1

understanding of music, but holds that “in addition to these abstract, intellectual meanings, music also communicates meanings which in some way refer to the extramusical world of concepts, actions, emotional states, and character.”³ The referentialist seems to have problems with the absolutist’s isolation of the musical work from other experience; thus musical meaning rests in part on the depiction of something outside the work.⁴ According to Meyer, these seemingly conflicting arguments are not mutually exclusive, but rather “the result of a tendency toward philosophical monism rather than a product of any logical opposition between types of meaning.”⁵ In other words, a piece of music is able to convey both intramusical and extramusical meaning. This first problem is often confused with a separate problem, the problem of “expression.” This problem asks whether music is able to produce felt, qualitative experiences in the listener. The *formalist* argues that meaning in music is a result of a purely intellectual understanding of the music itself, while the *expressionist* argues that the music is “capable of exciting feelings and emotions in the listener.”⁶ In other words, confusion occurs when the expressionist is equated with the referentialist. The expressionist might hold that emotions and feelings are evoked by a piece of music, but that these feelings are not always related to something outside of the music. This does not also mean that an expressionist of this sort holds that referential meanings do not occur, but that they are not necessarily the same as the expressive, felt qualities. These so-called “absolute expressionists” argue that “expressive emotional meanings arise in

³ Ibid.

⁴ Bowman, *Philosophical Perspectives on Music*, p. 167

⁵ Meyer, *Emotion and Meaning in Music*, p. 1

⁶ Meyer, p. 3

response to music and that these exist without reference to the extramusical world.”⁷

Contrasted with this stance is “referential expressionists,” who “assert that emotional expression is dependent on an understanding of the referential content of music.”⁸ Meyer is primarily concerned with explicating absolute expressionism. He does not deny that referential meanings are possible, merely that they are distinct from absolute meanings.

So, if music is able to evoke feeling and this occurs without reference to something besides the music, how does it do this? Meyer calls his basic explanation for this phenomenon the “Psychological Theory of Emotions.” Meyer’s understanding of emotion rests on the distinction between the “feeling-tone accompanying emotional experience,” or the “affect” and the object or situation that this feeling accompanies.⁹ Thus, the affect is emotion’s ‘felt’ quality. Emotional states must be contrasted with non-emotional states like observation, deliberation, and calculation.¹⁰ These “affective” states always accompany some stimulus, but the causal connection between a stimulus and its response is by no means absolute. Instead, the affective response is situational; a stimulus may cause one person to respond, but not another. Meyer makes two claims: first, the relationship between the stimulus and the individual depends on “a tendency in the organism to think or act in a particular way.” Secondly, affect occurs when this tendency is “arrested or inhibited.”¹¹ Thus, when a tendency is unable to occur because it is stopped or comes into conflict with another tendency, an emotional affect, or response, will occur. The confliction of tendencies may further induce confusion and doubt, which

⁷ Ibid., p. 3

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid., p. 12

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 13

¹¹ Ibid., p. 14

in turn might be further stimuli for a tendency toward "clarification."¹² If this tendency towards clarification is inhibited, another affective response will occur.

Affects, then, are undifferentiated responses with the same character. How, then, does this account for the seeming range of emotional states from hatred to ecstasy? Meyer argues that the notion of differentiated emotional states is the mistaking of learned behavior for these affective responses. In other words, observed characteristics such as facial expressions and motor responses are "denotative," or a "means of communication."¹³ Simply because there are different observable reactions in human behavior accompanying an emotional response does not mean that the emotional responses are the result of differentiated affective feeling in the individual. These responses are characteristic of the situation or context, rather than the affective feeling itself. This emotional behavior is a matter of intensity: the greater the affective stimulation, the greater the behavioral response. When these affective stimulations are their most intense, the less differentiated the behavior tends to be. For example, weeping accompanies not only sorrow, but ecstatic joy. Moreover, these responses seem to be automatic. Thus, "the more automatic affective behavior is, the less differentiated it tends to be."¹⁴ So, differentiated responses in behavior seem to be learned, and overtime automatic, and thus products of the intensity of undifferentiated affective stimulation.

Again, emotional experience is not quite the same as emotional affect. Emotional experiences are differentiated in that the individual is aware of the stimulus situation of which it is a result. Meyer states: "The affective for which we have names are grouped and named because of similarities of the stimulus situation, not because the affects of

¹² Ibid., p.16

¹³ Ibid., p. 17

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 18

different groups are per se different.”¹⁵ “It is only through their attendant circumstances that feelings like love, hate, joy, or sadness become discrete emotions. There is no ‘love’ without a specific object or situation”¹⁶ Thus affect can be called “pre-cognitive”, while the experience of this affect is “post-cognitive.”¹⁷ Why is it necessary to distinguish emotional affect and emotional experience? Meyer wants to show that musical feeling can be dependent solely on the music, rather than some non-musical association. In other words, if a piece of music arouses certain affects, the musical work itself is the cause of the emotional experience, not something else. If these affects are aroused because of the “psychological theory of emotions,” or the relationship of different tendencies, based on inhibition or conflict, then ordinary musical feeling need not always be dependent on some outside, non-musical stimulus. Finally, these tendencies are the result of certain learned stylistic expectations known and learned by the listener.

Meyer attempts to describe “the nature of the relationships which exist between the stimulus [music], the listener’s perceptions and mental processes, and his responses.”¹⁸ In order to apply the psychological theory of emotions to musical experience, Meyer must show how a given musical stimulus arouses and inhibits tendencies, provoking affective response, and eventually emotional experiences.

Meyer defines “tendencies” as “any automatic response patterns, whether natural or learned...[which] includes habit reactions and, inevitably, acquired concepts and meaning.”¹⁹ Moreover, there are conscious and unconscious tendencies. Unconscious patterns are those in which a response pattern occurs fully and completely. Thus, the

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 19

¹⁶ Bowman, p. 168

¹⁷ Ibid..

¹⁸ Meyer, p. 24

¹⁹ Ibid..

more habitual the behavior becomes, the more unconscious it is. So, when the tendency becomes inhibited, the perceiver becomes conscious, because the natural course of the pattern has not taken place. Tendencies, then, are "expectations." A tendency is an *expectation* that a certain event will transpire in a certain, understood way. A series of antecedent and consequent events will occur, even unconsciously, and are thus expected. According to Meyer, particular patterns are expected by the listener in the course of a musical stimulus. Expectations can be either specific or general. A particular harmonic outcome, such as a cadence, may be expected in a piece of music found in the baroque period, for example. The expectation of one particular outcome is *specific*. A *general* expectation is non-specific, in that the listener is "not sure precisely how they will be fulfilled. The antecedent stimulus situation may be such that several consequents may be almost equally probable."²⁰ For example, the repetition of a certain melodic fragment provoke the expectation that it will change in some way; how it will change, and to what degree, is less clear. Related to this sort of expectation, is the expectation that emerges when situations are *ambiguous*. These sorts of situations occur when expectations become "continually mistaken or inhibited," so that the individual is unsure of what to expect next.²¹ This ignorance of what to expect is "suspense." *Suspense*, then, is an extended uncertainty about what to expect in the future course of events in the music; it is ignorance because "the present course of events is itself so unusual and upsetting that, since it cannot be understood, no predictions as to the future can be made."²² Another important experience the listener can undergo is *surprise*. Suspense does not result in surprise. Rather, surprise is most likely to occur when particular expectations have been

²⁰ Ibid., p 26

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid., p. 27

met by the music, and there is no expectation of the unexpected. Put another way, the surprise arises out of a comfortable feeling of continuity, which is then shattered in a musical instant. While these distinctions present different modes of emotional affect, they are both conscious and unconscious.

Conscious or unconscious expectations are products of the listener's own attitude towards the piece of music. Expectations are the result of training and understanding of the stylistic framework in which the music belongs. When an individual reflects over the music as following normal tendencies and expectations, the individual is "conscious" of what has occurred in the music. When these normal expectations are inhibited in some manner, the expectations are more likely to become conscious, because something unexpected has occurred. Unconscious expectations, however, will be experienced as feeling or affect, because no cognitive *reflection is taking place regarding what is* happening in the music. The individual still has tendencies and expectations, but is not focused on them. So, when these expectations become inhibited, the individual recognizes something unnatural as occurring, but not in an "intellectual" way. Rather, the inhibition or suppression of a tendency or expectation will arouse affect or felt-emotion.²³ Normal completion of tendencies will not always arouse affect (but that doesn't make them meaningless), but if "the sound succession fails to follow its customary course, or if it involves obscurity or ambiguity, then it can be assumed that the listener's tendencies would be inhibited or otherwise upset and that the tensions arising... would be experienced as affect, provided that they were not rationalized as conscious intellectual experience."²⁴

²³ Ibid., p. 31

²⁴ Ibid., p 32

In this way, Meyer illustrates the nature of emotional affect and experience in music. This, however, is not his sole aim. Meyer also wants to relate this understanding to meaning. Before musical meaning can be explicated, however, Meyer must show what meaning is. Meyer defines meaning as a “triadic” relationship between an object or stimulus, the consequent of the stimulus, or that to which the stimulus is connected, and the conscious observer. The type of meaning Meyer is concerned with is “embodied” meaning. Contrary to “designative” meaning, where an object points to an object that is different from itself (a communicative symbol or sign), embodied meaning points only to itself. In other words, from a musical standpoint, embodied meaning results when one musical event points to another, or makes an individual expect another musical event.²⁵ Meaning emerges when a musical stimulus causes an expectation in the listener for a consequent musical event. Thus, music is meaningless when no expectation is aroused.

Musical experience, however, is a process. As such, there is a constant reevaluation of expectations. New musical events constantly occur, and thus new expectations, as the piece progresses. A past musical stimulus gives rise to consequent musical events, which in turn become the stimulus for further consequent musical events. New “triadic” relationships are constantly being established, and as such, new meanings arise.²⁶ These new meanings “coexist in memory with the earlier ones and, combining with them, constitute the meaning of the work as a total experience.”²⁷ Meyer then distinguishes between three stages of meaning. The first of which is “hypothetical meanings.” These are “probability” relationships, based on the stylistic framework in which the piece is set. In other words, based on a musical stimulus, the listener is

²⁵ Ibid., p. 35

²⁶ Ibid., p 36-37

²⁷ Ibid., p. 37

expecting a number of outcomes. Sometimes one outcome is more probable than the other, and thus the hypothetical meaning is less ambiguous. However, if these outcomes are all equally probable, the meaning is much more ambiguous. The second stage of meaning is "evident meanings." Once the consequent musical event has occurred, the relationship between the antecedent and consequent is perceived. Evident meaning is a chain of causal connections, where the consequent musical event becomes an antecedent for another musical event, and so on. Of course, each new consequent gives rise to new hypothetical meanings (as each new stimulus creates new expectations). "Evident meaning is colored and conditioned by hypothetical meaning. For the actual relationship between the gesture and its consequent is always considered in the light of the expected relationship."²⁸ The final stage of meaning is "determinate meanings," which are complex relationships between the hypothetical meaning, evident meaning, and the later stages of the musical piece. The listener is in a position to comprehend all the meanings that have arisen in the first two stages, where "the work is timeless in memory."²⁹ This meaning then can undergo "intellectual objectification." Expectation is itself an intellectual activity, but is one that is dependent on habit. When reflection occurs, however, the meaning becomes objectified. This is more likely in someone who is musically trained or competent, but also occurs during a disruption of expectation. When meaning becomes the *focus* of attention, the individual is aware of the musical meaning, and objectifies it. Meaning, then, does not solely rest on the objectifying the work as whole, nor is it the sum of the meanings of these parts (stimulus-expectation-consequent parts); both are important, as the musical listening is a dynamic process, partly

²⁸ Ibid., p. 38

²⁹ Ibid.

objectifying, partly concerned with emotion. The degree to which one type of meaning is preferred over the other depends mostly on the mood and disposition of the listener: his acquired musical habits, and the like.

How, then, does this meaning relate to affect or felt-emotion? According to Meyer, emotional affect is just the feeling of a pre-cognitive understanding of intellectual meaning. There is no "inseparable gap" between emotion and cognition, which traditional understandings of the two seem to posit. "Whether a piece of music gives rise to affective experience or to intellectual experience depends upon the disposition and training of the listener."³⁰ In other words, affective/conscious experience depends on what the listener brings to the musical experience. If a person views music as primarily an intellectual activity, they are less likely to view it solely in terms of emotion. On the other hand, a sensualist or emotivist is much more likely to base musical experience on the felt-affect that the music arouses.

Obviously then, style is an important factor in all of this. Certain musical tendencies, of which the listener has expectations, depend on a particular stylistic framework. Meyer defines "musical styles" as "more or less complex systems of sound relationships understood and used in common by a group of individuals."³¹ These relationships are matters of probability; the meaning of one particular sound stimulus depends on its relationship with all other stimuli in a style system. Furthermore, these relationships are not universal or natural relationships. In other words, the relationships present in one culture will not necessarily be the same as those in other cultures. This is illustrated by the difference in Eastern and Western music. Nor does a culture have only

³⁰ Ibid., p. 40

³¹ Ibid., p. 45

one musical style- there may be many in the same culture.³² For example, modern rock music has a much different style than from the system found in “classical” music. An individual is brought up in these various style systems, and thus form habitual responses based on these relationships. From this learned habit, expectations emerge. The listener constantly listens to music or performs it early in life, and so acquires knowledge of these relationships, either consciously or subconsciously. Simply knowing the *what* of a particular relationship is not enough; the relationship must acquire a felt “urgency” or “motor response.” Taking a cue from Bertrand Russell, Meyer states: “Understanding music is not a matter of dictionary definitions, of knowing this, that, or the other rule of musical syntax and grammar, rather it is a matter of habits correctly acquired in one’s self and properly presumed in the particular work.”³³

Style, then, is made up of numerous tendencies, interacting in different probability relationships with one another. Moreover, expectation rests on this basis. Expression, or affect/emotion-felt, is dependent on deviations from these tendencies, relationships, or “norms.” Eventually, these deviations will become subsumed up into the style system, thus becoming norms. Composers, brought up in these different style systems, can be said to develop styles of their own for the sake of “aesthetic effect or to point up those already in use.”³⁴ The history of musical development, then, can be said to be an establishment of norms, deviations from norms, which in turn become norms, resulting in new deviations, and so on. Why does the composer feel the need to create these deviations? Accepted norms represent a “challenge” to the composer; a desire to create or “mold” the “fixed, recalcitrant” material allowed by tradition. “Here the artist tends to

³² Ibid., p. 60

³³ Ibid., p. 61

³⁴ Ibid., p. 65

destroy, through exaggeration, the very tradition upon which his expression depends.”³⁵

Clearly this is the case in Western music, as new works were constructed of new, more dissonant harmonies.³⁶

When approaching a musical work, there are certain beliefs and practices an individual brings to the musical experience. Attention is brought to into play. The listener is ready to “receive” the work of art. The belief that the individual will receive certain emotions is an important reason we have emotional affect in the first place (so Meyer argues). Meyer states: “...believing in the aesthetic significance of musical experience, we expect to have such an experience, and our bodies, responding to this mental set, prepare themselves for the experience”³⁷ Listeners also come to the experience with an implicit belief in the logic of the work of art. In other words, music is not a set of random noises (contrary to what Cage might try and show), but the purposeful creation of a composer who means for the progression in the music to happen for a reason.

Section III: Cooke and the Elements of Music

Meyer’s argument is that certain tendencies make up a particular stylistic framework, and that listeners respond accordingly. Although Meyer provides many examples to support his claims, another author presents a view of the particular elements in music that have been used throughout history to provide specific emotional expressions, exhibiting the “tendencies” Meyer discusses. Deryck Cooke, a prominent musicologist probably best known for preparing a “concert” edition of Mahler’s

³⁵ Ibid., p. 71

³⁶ These new harmonic and rhythmic innovations were often regarded as scandalous. Stravinsky’s *Le Sacre du Printemps* causes a riot at its premiere in Paris, in 1913.

³⁷ Ibid., p75

uncompleted 10th Symphony, is unabashed in his view that music expresses feelings. Although not a philosopher, a musicologist's standpoint should surely be valued in a discussion of emotions and music. Essentially, Cooke holds that music expresses universal emotions, but through different means, depending on the culture or style. Cooke's main thesis is that Western music, beginning in about 1400, (with the advent of written notation), has used similar techniques and methods to express emotions. According to Cooke, notes carry certain emotional connotations, just like words. He is sympathetic to the view that music is a product of culture, but he questions the underlying basis that allows the expression of emotions in the first place. In other words, why is it that these certain techniques are used by particular composers to express particular feelings or emotions? Cooke's basic answer depends on the harmonic series. Although he admits that conditioning plays an important role in the learned responses of different listeners, he thinks that there is a fundamental basis for these works of music to be constructed.³⁸

Music is constructed of various "elements," each of which contributes to the expressive nature of the music. He starts with the basic idea that music is a series of relationships, or "tensions," between different notes. Now, these tensions emerge in three dimensions: pitch, time, and volume. According to Cooke, "pitch-tensions can be regarded in two different ways—as *tonal tensions* (what the actual notes of a scale are) and as *intervallic tensions* (in what direction and at what distance the notes are from one another)."³⁹ For example, a tonal tension might be the actual notes D and an A above it, while the intervallic tension would be distance between the notes, a rising fifth in the key

³⁸ Ibid., p. 24-25

³⁹ Deryck Cooke, *The Language of Music*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, (1959), p.34

of D. Similar expressive qualities are correlated to identical tonal tensions, while diverse intervallic tensions lead to diverging expressive qualities. This seems obvious, but he stresses that tonal and intervallic tensions result not only from “notes played successively (melodically)” but also “between notes played simultaneously (harmonically).”⁴⁰

The tonal tensions clearly have a natural foundation, consisting of a series of mathematical relationships. As Cooke states, the vibration of a string produces not only a fundamental note, but each division of this string vibrates, such as the two halves of the string, creating a series of “overtones”. Half the string produces a tone an octave higher, or double the frequency of the whole string. The next tone is $\frac{1}{3}$ the length, related to the tone before with half the length, so the relationship is 2:3 and so forth. This “rising succession of notes” is the harmonic series. The first six of the notes are usually labeled (and named so because of the relationship with the note immediately preceding it): the fundamental tone, an octave above, a fifth, fourth, major third, and minor third. It is beyond the scope of this paper to get into the complexities of music theory, but the point is that the harmonic series can be derived from one note.⁴¹ Moreover, the smaller the ratio between the notes, the further along the harmonic series they are, and the less related the note is to the fundamental tone. Cooke goes on to describe each of the harmonic tensions that make up a “scale,” or the division of the harmonic series into a group of eight notes, all related to the fundamental note, the tonic. Although Cooke provides examples, and considerable detail about the mathematic relationships between the notes, let us just look at the basics.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 35

⁴¹ See Appendix A, Example 1

First, a couple of clarifications: The triad is the one of the basic elements in musical theory, consisting of the tonic, a third, and a fifth. These triads are either major or minor, from which the major and minor scales are based. Music in a major key is generally said to be pleasurable, expressing “positive” emotions, while the minor, “negative” emotions. Why is this? The major third seems natural because it is early on in the harmonic series. Likewise, the minor third, while still early in the harmonic series, has a “depressed sound,” because it is lower than the major third. As Cooke states: “Western composers, expressing the ‘rightness’ of happiness by means of the major third, expressed the ‘wrongness’ of grief by means of the minor third...”⁴² Of course, that is not to say that all “sad” music is in the minor key. This is because there are other agents involved in a musical work, not simply harmony. But according to Cooke, it is an important part. Fourths and fifths, on the other hand, are even earlier in the harmonic series and, for centuries, music was composed using solely these intervals. As Western music progressed, composers began taking greater license with harmonies.

While harmony represents a fundamental element of music, these tonal tensions are expressed in different ways, through what Cooke calls “vitalizing agents.” These “vitalizing agents” are time, volume, and pitch.

Time is the vehicle in which music is set. Cooke states: “...In music [time] expresses the speed and rhythm of feelings and events—in other words, the state of mental, emotional, or physical *animation*.”⁴³ Deviations from measured time not only recall earlier periods in Western music (Gregorian chant, circa 900 A.D.), but music that is not strictly metered, such as plainsong, has a fluid, spiritual quality, precisely because

⁴² Ibid., p. 57

⁴³ Ibid., p. 97

“it [is removed] from the human categories of time.”⁴⁴ In measured rhythm, “fixed-points” are set, creating “intervals” of time, in which “rhythmic accent,” or the stressing of a particular fixed points (or beat), occurs. One antithesis, for instance, is music that is in duple (two beats) or triple (three beats) meters. Duple meter clearly demonstrates the normal mode of walking, running, or marching, while triple meter a freer dance rhythm (the waltz, for example). The time tension of “duration” occurs when notes are made longer or shorter relative to one another. Cooke divides duration into three categories: tempo, movement, and phrasing.⁴⁵ Tempo concerns how slow or fast a piece of music is performed. Fast pieces of music express anger, excitement, and the like, while slow pieces can express lethargy, melancholy, and so on. Obviously there is a wide range of tempos and speeds, so this would seem to correlate in part to the wide range of expression in music. The movement of a melodic line or accompaniment affects the overall disposition of the music. He states: “There is clearly a great expressive difference between an even stream of notes of equal length and a jerky, agitated succession of notes alternately long and short (dotted rhythms).”⁴⁶ Depending on the phrasing of the music, or its relative make-up of notes held for their full value (legato), or cut off (staccato), the expressive qualities are different.

Cooke argues that the expression in music is altered by volume. When music is loud, more emphasis is placed on it, and when it is soft, less emphasis. Of course, there are always exceptions to this rule. For example, when a section of a piece is so soft that the listener must really be attentive to discern it, the section becomes emphasized.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 36

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 37

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 37

Moreover, devices such as *crescendos* and *diminuendos*, or an increase or decrease in volume respectively, causes a corresponding change in the level of emphasis.

The third vitalizing agent Cooke describes is “pitch.” Pitch is the spatial representation of notes in relation to one another. In other words, some notes are “higher” than others. This can be seen in the notation of a musical score, but really it’s not counter-intuitive. When a pitch is above another, physically, the vibrations are faster, or higher, and it seems natural to represent them spatially with regard to one another. Of course, this “up-down” relation is a metaphor, but it is an important element of musical experience, nevertheless. During a musical experience, not only does the listener perceive different sounds, they relate them to one another. A descending line of notes will express something completely different than an ascending line of notes. More important is the “tonal tensions” between these notes. In other words, harmony is still the base factor here, but the “pitch” helps make this manifest. How does this relate to expression? Upward moving pitches are usually going to suggest swelling excitement, increased arousal, while downward pitches the opposite.

The characterizing agents, tone-color and texture, serve as key factors in the expressive element. Tone-color concerns the type of sound or vehicle through which the sound is produced. A theme played by a French horn has different expressive qualities than the same theme played by a cello. Cooke thinks that this is music’s “chief means of dramatic characterization,” stating “one need hardly expatiate on the warmly passionate strings, the pastoral flute and oboe, the querulous or comic bassoon, the heroic trumpet, or the solemn trombone...”⁴⁷ Texture, on the other hand, refers to thickness or thinness of pitch. With a full orchestra playing, the texture is going to be very thick, creating

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 112

emotional emphasis, and perhaps even melodrama. There are many different types of texture, and each of these has different implications regarding music. For example, a monophonic, unaccompanied melody is capable of expressing emotional emptiness or spiritual melancholy.

Each one of these elements cannot be said to be sufficient on their own to produce expressive qualities in the music; rather, these elements interact in a network or nexus in various degrees. Dividing them up this way is just a general way of understanding some of the basic elements that make up a piece of music. Although Cooke focuses his discussion of emotional expression mostly on tonal or harmonic relations, he states that rhythm, or musical time, is just as important. Like the harmonic series, which has its basis in nature, Cooke argues that “basic rhythmic impulses” exist, which are “undoubtedly connected with the whole rhythm of nature (through [the] senses, bloodstream, and glands), with the speed and rhythm of life...and with the rhythm and cadence of [a] native tongue...”⁴⁸ While focusing on these fundamental “elements” of music, it is clear that musical emotional experience is a dynamic process. While individual elements add to the whole, musical experience should not be understood as the “sum of its parts,”-- it is the “general effect” of the whole that moves us. In other words, intellectual, cognitive analysis of music is generally not conducive to emotional experience. At a musical performance, for example, few untrained listeners will want to analyze every element of the piece. Rather, Cooke seems to point to something along Meyer’s unconscious “tendencies.”

So what of factors outside of the music? Joseph A. Goguen: Although the music is the stimulus, there is a clearly a whole wealth of personal experience involved.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 183

According to Goguen, performances are “*embodied*, in the sense that very particular aspects of each participant are deeply implicated in the processes of interpretation, potentially including their auditory capabilities, clothing, companions, musical skills, prior musical experiences...More than that, participants *enact*, or actively construct, the context of musical experience.”⁴⁹ Treating the music as a separate entity, as is so often done in musical analysis, omits a wealth of information. While Cooke and Meyer focus on style, and particular tendencies as constituting musical experience, Goguen thinks that events around us affect musical, in particular, emotional, experience. In other words, while Meyer points to the formal entity of music as providing the stimulus for musical emotion, and thereby meaning, Goguen argues that events around us are also reflected in a performance of the work (or any musical experience for that matter—listening on a pair of headphones, for example). In a wonderful anecdote written by his wife, the range of musical experience is described about a single note “A.” She describes the range of emotions that are evoked by a single note on a piano, played at a different octave, or at a different dynamic marking (loud, soft).⁵⁰ But more so, the mood of the audience, the events in their lives, and in the world around them, affect the musical experience. Like Meyer, Goguen is reacting to a tendency to remove the “listener” from musical analysis. Even Cooke, who points to a physical, acoustical description of emotion, never loses sight of the emotional affect itself. Be that as it may, Meyer states that “Ultimately is the

⁴⁹ Joseph A. Goguen, “Musical Qualia, Context, Time and Emotion,” from *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 11. No. 3-4, (2004), p. 121

⁵⁰ Goguen’s wife states: “On 20 March 2003, the day the Iraq war began, I performed an improvisation at the University of Vienna...Part of the lecture showed how the same ‘middle A’ could be perceived totally differently, depending on its context...Middle A is a beginning sound, and on a good piano (such as the Bosendorfer grand they gave me for practice) you can hear its many colours hanging in space, carrying the pain of numerous lives, from Mozart to Webern, and now poor Turkish immigrant workers, and Iraqi civilians... Low A has an angry sound, an aggressive wish to control, a cynical view...High A is like a scream, a loved one lost in war, frustration, need; or a whisper, even a caress. Every note has its overtones, and they are all connected, as are all of us, middle, low, hope, fear, pain, and love...”

listener who must make connotation concrete. In so doing the listener may draw upon his stock of culturally established images, including those derived from literature and mythology, or he may relate the connotative complex to his own particular and peculiar experiences.”⁵¹ Thus, the elements of music can become associated with particular extra-musical ideas. Ultimately, the extent of this association depends on the training of the listener (his ability to recognize certain salient features of piece of music), and the events, and moods occurring around him. Cooke does not analyze to any extent the nature of emotion, like Meyer, but the two are not incompatible -what Cooke labels an “emotion” is still dependent on the music itself.

Admittedly, the discussion of emotions and music has been rather abstract up to this point. Perhaps specific musical examples will help elucidate the above passages, in particular Cooke’s argument that music has used similar means to express similar emotions.

Section IV: Music as Heard

Ludwig Van Beethoven’s nine symphonies are regarded by many as the summit of Western art. In these nine symphonies, a range of emotion is expressed, from sorrow to ecstatic joy. With them, he ushered in a new era, paving a way for the Romantics of the next generation. The Austro-German Romantics in particular regarded him as a colossus, and his innovations can be found throughout these composers’ works. Three of these Romantic composers- Wagner, Mahler, and Bruckner- all display stylistic similarities in their symphonies to Beethoven. They use many of the elements discussed by Cooke, while still using a unique style.

⁵¹ Meyer, *Emotion and Meaning in Music*, p. 266

*Sorrow, Death, and the Funeral March*⁵²

In the second movement of Beethoven's 3rd Symphony⁵³, the composer presents a funeral march. The Eroica Symphony was a radical departure in symphonic music. Whereas most instrumental music in the West had been "absolute," or without an overarching idea, Beethoven gave this symphony a subject, or a "hero". Inspired by the ideals of liberalism and the French Revolution, Beethoven crafted a work that expresses lamentation and mourning over the death of a heroic figure. The movement begins with a soft, *piano* melody in the strings. The melody is *legato* (connected), with the lower strings providing a rhythmic ostinato at (00:02).⁵⁴ The tempo is slow, in common time, indicating a march-like rhythm. Moreover, the key is minor, with muffled drums faintly heard in the background. The melody gradually builds, the notes becoming faster, until an oboe enters at (00:36), repeating the melodic line at a higher register. The ostinato in the strings momentarily becomes louder at this point. Cooke calls this movement "slow and dragging," but also points to melodic line as exhibiting some of the harmonic tendencies that are basic to musical expression. For example, the falling line of the melody at (00:11) illustrates sighing, despair.⁵⁵ At (8:00) the strings begin a loud passage that is contrasted with the soft preceding sections. The pitches are upward moving, adding a sense of urgency. At (8:09) the low strings begin a different ostinato, still in

⁵² Many of these musical topoi are presented by Keith Johns in his discussion of the roots of Liszt's Symphonic Poems in the Beethoven's Symphonies. Keith T. Johns, *The Symphonic Poems of Franz Liszt*, ed. Saffle, Stuyvesant, New York: Pendragon, 1997, p. 17-44)

⁵³ See Disc 1, Track 1. Relevant points on the track will be described with reference to track time (minutes:seconds). Recording: Ludwig Van Beethoven, *9 Symphonien*, conducted by Herbert von Karajan, Berliner Philharmoniker, *Deutsche Grammophon*, 1963.

⁵⁴ Ostinato is a pattern (in this case the lower strings) that repeats while other elements in the music are changing. Laure Schnapper: 'Ostinato', *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (Accessed [06 April 2006]), <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>

⁵⁵ See Example 2, in Appendix A

minor, of sustained eighth notes. This builds, as the texture becomes thicker, with different instrumental sections repeating the theme. The low horns enter at (8:40) with a deep, sustained note. Once the climax is reached, a return of the first section, with its slow, march like rhythms, and sorrowful melody begins (around 10:17). The movement ends with a momentary assertion of the horns (16:47), but this soon fades. Thus, Beethoven depicted a sorrowful testimony to his hero, and the Romantics of the next generation, both consciously and unconsciously, used similar means to achieve similar ends. Two examples of this are the first movement of Bruckner's 4th Symphony, written 1874, nearly seventy years after Beethoven's Third (1803) as well as the first movement of Mahler's 5th, written in 1903⁵⁶

Like the "Eroica," the second movement of Bruckner's 4th "Romantic" is in common time.⁵⁷ The movement begins with a rhythmic ostinato in muted violins and violas played *pianissimo*. This ostinato is a series of eighth notes beginning on the second beat.⁵⁸ The movement begins as a slow march with a *legato* theme in the cellos (marked "ausdrucksvoll" or "expressively"⁵⁹) that moves downward (00:10). This theme is then repeated by the woodwinds (00:48). The minor key, slow march tempo, and emphasizing in the basses of "...the march character with their heavy alternation of tonic and dominant..."⁶⁰ creates a mournful, solemn mood. The middle section provides a

⁵⁶ Paul Hawkshaw: 'Anton Bruckner', *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (Accessed [06 April 2006]), <http://www.grovemusic.com> Peter Franklin: 'Gustav Mahler', *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (Accessed [06 April 2006]), <http://www.grovemusic.com>

⁵⁷ See Disc 1, track 2 *Bruckner: The Complete Symphonies*, cond. Eugen Jochum, Skatskapelle Dresden, EMI, 2000

⁵⁸ See Appendix A, Example 3

⁵⁹ "Ausdruck" *The Oxford Companion to Music*. Ed. Alison Latham. Oxford University Press, 2002. *Oxford Reference Online*. Oxford University Press. Washington and Lee University. 7 December 2005 <<http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t114.e482>>

⁶⁰ Erwin Doernberg, *The Life and Symphonies of Anton Bruckner*, London: Barrie and Rockliff, 1960, p. 153

contrast to the somber first section. The music begins to build, as horns enter at (06:30). The Bruckner example is clearly more triumphant than the 'Eroica,' movement, with a heavy use of brass calls (7:30). But like the Eroica, after the climax fades (08:09), the first section is repeated in an altered form. The movement ends with timpani used in a march-like rhythm (16:15), further illustrating this movements connection to the Beethoven.

A horn call by a trumpet begins the first movement of Mahler's 5th Symphony⁶¹. This example shows a funeral march, but somewhat of a different character than the Bruckner example. The use of horns and louder dynamic markings, in particular the rhythm of the introductory solo horn (which is characterized by dotted notes and triplets, giving the impression of a militaristic procession) gives this piece a sense of unrest, even anger. Like the previous examples, the meter of the movement is duple. The texture thickens, as the strings, woodwinds, horns, and percussion are used (00:23). These accompanying instruments perform a rhythmic ostinato throughout this introductory section. This ostinato is loud, marked *fortissimo* in the score, and the notes are in a low register. After the end of its solo, the trumpet participates in this same rhythmic ostinato(00:41). The tempo is of a moderate pacing (It is marked: "In gemessenem Schritt. Streng. Wie ein Kondukt" or "At a measured pace. Stern. Like a funeral procession), which in this case is played faster than the Beethoven.⁶² The key is C-sharp minor. The orchestra slowly fades to *pianissimo* in a series of trills in the woodwinds and the strings, giving way to a more lyrical theme (1:08) in the strings that Floros calls

⁶¹ See Disc 1, Track 3, *Mahler: The Complete Symphonies*, cond. Leonard Bernstein, New York Philharmonic, Sony Classical, 2001 and Appendix A, Example 4

⁶² Constanin Floros, *Gustav Mahler: The Symphonies*, p. 143

“threnodic” and “elegiac.”⁶³ The texture of a solo instrument playing a melody with accompanying rhythmic ostinato in others (in this case, the strings) is markedly similar to the opening of the funeral march of Beethoven’s *Eroica*. Although clearly the piece is much longer, the first minute alone exhibits many of the characteristics found in Beethoven’s *Third Symphony*.

The final example of “Funeral Music,” or music dealing with death and lamentation, is by Richard Wagner. This particular piece is “Siegfried’s Funeral March,” which occurs at the end of the second scene of the third act of *Gotterdammerung*, the final opera of Wagner’s Ring Cycle⁶⁴. Here, the hero of the opera, Siegfried, has just been slain, and is slowly carried on his funeral bier. Three low chords deep in the strings rising by half steps opens this selection. Again, a bombastic rhythmic ostinato in drums and horns interplays with the *legato*, flowing string theme (00:10). This fades, and horns intone a melancholic theme (the so-called “Walsung” leitmotiv, 00:29). Timpani can be heard softly in the background, and the music again builds. Another theme is heard (1:17), part of the Walsung leitmotiv, this time in the upper brass; tremolo (repetition of the same note) strings accompany this. The dark, minor key is juxtaposed with a horn call in major (2:53), signaling the dramatic shift that will take place. The minor ostinato chords now become major (3:15), and the tragic opening becomes a heroic apotheosis, with brass fanfares and cymbal crashes. The last minute or so of the selection is more reflective, with a harp (5:22), and softer dynamic markings. The rhythmic ostinato is still present, though, in a much more subdued form (softer, and fewer instruments): the final act of the opera is beginning.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ See Disc 1, Track 4, *Gotterdammerung*, from *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, cond. By Sir Georg Solti, Wiener Philharmoniker, Decca, 1997 and Appendix A, Example 5.

Anger, Conflict: "Sturm und Drang"

The fourth movement from Beethoven's 6th "Pastoral" Symphony provides an example of an expression of this theme.⁶⁵ The movement is the depiction of a violent storm that emerges in the midst of the merry-making of the country-folk. The storm is expressed through particular harmonic relationships like the diminished-seventh chord, dominant ninths, tritones, dissonance, and modulations. Chromatic themes are also present. The dynamic markings are often loud, with many accents. The orchestral texture is often thick, the motivic ideas short. The piece opens with a descending pattern of high strings, played lightly (clearly depicting rain-drops), punctuated by low tremolo strings. These ominous strings, with their unexpected entrance, signal what is to come. Suddenly, a loud, dissonant chord is sounded in the brass, woodwinds, with rolling timpani (00:25). Here is commotion and confusion expressed wonderfully. The music builds, and strings begin a rollicking (quick rhythms, rising up and down) accompaniment to horns playing dominant fifths (01:40). This climax continues until the dissonance is eventually resolved, the turbulent strings and brass fade, and a calm, tranquil melody in major is heard in the woodwinds (03:09). The storm is over.

Mahler's complex tempo markings in the second movement of his 5th Symphony reads: "Stürmisch bewegt. Mit größter Vehemnz" or "Turbulently rough. With Greatest Vehemence."⁶⁶ The movement begins in A minor. The part of this movement is comparable to Beethoven's Sixth Symphony. Floros points out tritone motives that occur in the trumpets and a diminished seventh chord throughout the brass and strings

⁶⁵ See Disc 1, Track 5. *Beethoven: 9 Symphonien*, cond. Karajan. See Appendix A, Example 6

⁶⁶ Floros, p. 145. Again, although the development section contains examples of diminished seven chords, the opening part of the movement, with its all-around louder dynamic markings and thicker texture, is a better example of conflict ('*sturm und drang*'). See Disc 1, Track 6 and Appendix A, Example 7

(01:14).⁶⁷ The opening of the movement begins with the lower strings, bassoon, and double bassoon marked *fff*. There are many *sforzando* markings, adding to the agitation of the section. This arcing theme is accented by *fortissimo* trumpets playing a quick succession of *staccato* eighth notes (this succession begins at 00:04). After the upper woodwinds play a series of three note motives (00:08), the strings and lower woodwinds begin a rapid, chromatic series of ascending and descending notes (00:11). These notes are accented by the trombones. The rhythm is cut time, while the tempo is fast. The first measures have *veloce* and *rubato* markings, making the rhythm faltering and uneasy.⁶⁸ Generally the accented notes are dissonant, and this compounded with the chromatic movement of the strings and woodwinds further increases the agitation of the section. Although the piece is comprised of many sections, this dissonance and conflict is only partly resolved when a loud, upward moving theme in a major key is heard in the brass towards the end of the movement (11:25), complete with cymbal crashes, and timpani rolls. Mahler is not ready to resolve the unrest yet: it is only the second movement of the symphony.

From its opening measures, the third movement (Scherzo) of Bruckner's 9th expresses conflict.⁶⁹ The woodwinds (an oboe and clarinets) initiate a dissonant chord in triadic pattern of two eighth notes (on the third beat of the measure) and a held dotted half note. This short motivic idea is marked *piano* at this point in the score, and the violins perform a *pizzicato* of descending quarter notes and ascending eighth notes (compare to the beginning of the Beethoven movement). This occurs four times (the pattern becoming inverted each time) before the upper horns (8 French horns, trumpet,

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 147

⁶⁸ *Rubato* is "bending" time, or not following strict, metrical time.

⁶⁹ See Disc 2, Track 1, *Bruckner: The Complete Symphonies*, See Appendix A, Example 8

Wagner tubas) enter with a cataclysmic pattern of two eighth notes followed by five quarter notes repeated *fortissimo* (00:39). The lower horns (trombones and tubas) play this same pattern (00:40), adding more texture to the section. The timpani have initiated the same pattern from the beginning of the phrase. The woodwinds and strings, on the other hand, play the *pizzicato* descending and ascending pattern of quarter notes and eighth notes, *per* the original sequence of *pizzicato* notes. Although this section of conflict is contrasted with calmer sections throughout the movement, it ends the movement. Again, this is due in part to the placement of the movement in the symphony.

Idealism, Beauty, and Love

The third movement of Beethoven's Ninth "Choral" Symphony⁷⁰ is a delicate expression of beauty and love. There is a moderate tempo, slow note values, a narrow melodic range, sometimes operatic, rubato, long phrases, major keys, and soft dynamic markings. It is a song-like, poetic illustration of emotion (Cooke asks, what is a song, but a musical poetry?⁷¹), long and drawn-out. The main theme first appears in the violins, and is composed mostly of melodic fourths, and major thirds (00:16). The loudest section of the piece is a joyous repetition of notes in a major key, signaling the "Ode to Joy" that is to follow in the next movement (12:53). The movement is dominated by major keys, with very little dissonance, ensuring serenity. There is a certain degree of melancholy that pervades parts of the movement. This is in due in part, perhaps, to certain amount of semitonal motion (half-steps) in the theme, and other parts of the movements (beginning at 2:10, 2:24, and 15:28). Music that exhibits this sort of expression is often described as a "song without words."

⁷⁰ See Disc 2, Track 2, *Beethoven: 9 Symphonien*, Appendix A, Example 9

⁷¹ Cooke, *The Language of Music*

From the opening measures of the “adagietto” (fourth movement) of Mahler’s 5th symphony measures a lyrical, cantabile melody persists.⁷² Scored solely for harp and strings, the texture remains simple and song-like. Written as a declaration of love to his future wife Alma, Mahler infuses the movement with beauty and grace. The tempo is moderately slow, marked “sehr langsam.” The melody is searching and rising, full of long, drawn-out phrases. Legato and ritardando (slower than marked) signs are placed throughout, with rubato bending and shaping the phrases. The dynamic markings are generally soft, reaching *fortissimo* in only two places (3:37, 10:05). There are many short *crescendos* and *diminuendos*; thus, the movement is not static, and a desirous, almost passionate mood is expressed. Moreover, the harp accompanies in arpeggiated patterns, flowing alongside the melody.

The opening to the second movement (Adagio) of Bruckner’s 7th Symphony is a melancholic portrait of the cantilena.⁷³ Beginning in a minor key, the movement is marked “Sehr feierlich und sehr langsam” (very solemn and very slow), like most of Bruckner’s slow movements. The low strings and horns (violas, cellos, double bass, Wagner horns, tubas) softly begin the movement, playing *piano* and only slightly moving in a *crescendo*. Soon after, the strings announce the first theme (00:11), one that encompasses over thirty measures; as such, it is a long, drawn out melody. The notes in the first four measures of the theme in the first violin constitute a narrow range, and this affects the sadness of the piece (harmonically, more dissonant). The accented quarter notes (which are marked *mezzo forte*) of the theme are tragic, while the common time

⁷² See Disc 2, Track 3. An interesting note about this particular recording: It is a live recording of the adagietto played at Robert F. Kennedy’s Funeral Mass. This occasion is the sort of example illustrates Goguen’s views on context and background in a musical experience. A leader had just been assassinated, and emotions were surely aroused by such a piece as this. See Appendix A, Example 10

⁷³ See Disc 2, Track 4, See Appendix A, Example 11

suggests a march. The rhythmic pattern of two quarter notes, a dotted quarter, and two sixteen notes is repeated twice in these opening measures, and this division almost suggests “weeping.” Towards the end of this long movement, after numerous modulations (key changes), part of the main melody is repeated in the strings, in a minor key, though, with an oboe soon following. A new element, however, is added: a long timpani roll. At first, it is but a whisper, slowly building, until it becomes loudest at the climactic point of the melodic line. The effect is devastating: the drum is unexpected and surprising, seemingly out of place. As melody softens, so too does the drum. After this section, the music builds again, ending with a triumphant brass fanfare.

Parsifal

The final selection is the prelude to Act I of *Parsifal*, Wagner’s final opera. Wagner represents a challenge to an “elemental” interpretation of his music. The music itself is deeply interwoven with the psychological and the philosophical. More than any other composer, he infused his operas with philosophical perspectives of the world, in particular those of Arthur Schopenhauer. Indeed, he wrote volumes of treatises on art, religion, and politics. Yet, music was his true medium, and through it, he achieved a level of expression few, if any, surpassed. To many, *Parsifal* represents the culmination of the man’s work. Even Nietzsche, who despised the Christian vehicle of *Parsifal*, admitted the following: “...speaking from a purely aesthetic point of view, has Wagner ever written anything *better*? The supreme psychological perception and precision as regards what had to be said, expressed, *communicated* here, the extreme concision and directness of form, every nuance of feeling conveyed epigrammatically...an extraordinarily sublimity of feeling, something experienced in the very depths of

music...of a cognizance and a penetration of vision that cuts through the soul as if with a knife, of sympathy with what is seen and shown forth..."⁷⁴

The prelude begins with a simple, monophonic melody sounded by the woodwind and strings.⁷⁵ Rhythmically, the majority of the notes are tied, effectively eliminating any sense of measured time. This is further enhanced by the slowness of the tempo, marked "sehr langsam" or "very slow." This rhythmic shapelessness creates a sense of other-worldliness (surely akin to plainsong, Gregorian chants of the early Roman Church-musical prayers), with the initial low register of the opening notes calling to mind Psalm 130: "De profundis clamavi ad te, Domine" or "Out of the depths, I cry to thee, o Lord." Indeed, the sense of world-weariness that characterizes the opera is effectively portrayed within the first thirty seconds of the prelude. The theme first appears in A flat major, and the orchestra crescendos and decrescendos until horns enter playing a succession of chords generally rising. The strings meanwhile play arpeggiated figures while the woodwinds repeat a series of triplets in the high register. The theme is again restated an octave higher in the trumpet, violins and oboe, this time alongside the arpeggiated pattern (01:03). After the arpeggiated pattern travels downward, the music ceases for a moment, until the single melodic phrase is heard again, but this time in a minor key. A theme that at first was solemn and sacred is now expressed with pain, indeed spiritual pain (02:16). At (2:51) the violins and woodwinds accent a dissonant note, almost in disgust. Horns enter again as before, with the strings rising in arpeggios, all in minor, adding a sense of unease, evoking suffering and torment, and continuing to crescendo as before. Oboe, violins and trumpet enter as before, this time an octave higher. Ernest Newman observes

⁷⁴ Ernest Newman, *The Wagner Operas*, Princeton: Princeton University Press (1949 p. 672-673

⁷⁵ See Appendix A, Example 12

that at this point that the trumpet is reaching the height of its register, increasing the urgency of the theme. At (04:30) a brass chorale (the Grail theme, or Dresden Amen) is heard, but this is soon followed by the "Faith" theme (05:02). This theme characterizes the bulk of the second part. The theme consists of a rising skip between the first and second notes, and then descending step-wise. The fourth note is played again after a rest, after which a final chord creates a cadential pattern, a half-cadence in fact, from the tonic to the dominant. That irresolution characterizes the "faith" theme is noteworthy: like a constant drive, a process, it never reaches a conclusion. The horns continue repeating this motive, modulating it, climaxing to a *fortissimo*, something that has not occurred until this point in the prelude. The grandeur of this section, due in part to the nature of the Faith theme, is quite affecting. The woodwinds repeat a much softer statement of the theme, contrasting vividly with the power of the horns (06:37).

The third part of the prelude (08:42) consists mostly of modulations, alterations and fragmentations of the three earlier themes (Sacrament, Grail, and Faith). It is intensely chromatic: part of the first theme is modulated from F sharp to G to A to B flat to G to C natural, and so on.⁷⁶ Wagner used chromaticism intensely in his later operas to express longing, desire, and other unfulfilled emotions. This section in particular is meant to represent the spiritual agony of Amfortas, the king of the Knights of the Grail, who suffers from a wound that cannot be healed. Indeed, through all of this modulation we begin to approach the main drama of the opera itself, descending out of the heavens, into the suffering of the world. The prelude ends, however, with a broken dominant seventh chord (Eflat7), played by the strings and woodwinds, reaching into the upper registers as before, as if making one final attempt to touch divinity, but like the chord, it

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 671-672

is unresolved, unanswered. The music's juxtaposition of fragility (the first theme) with strength (the Grail and Faith motives), is incredibly affecting. Even someone with no knowledge of the "sadness" or "resignation" that characterizes the story of *Parsifal*, would be hard-pressed, I think, to not think of some similar description, when describing the work.

Section V: The Metaphysics of Music- Schopenhauer and Music

Meyer and Cooke have pointed to the properties or elements of the music as expressing emotions, but is there something more? Arthur Schopenhauer is unique among the "great" philosophers in giving serious attention to the philosophical nature of music. His metaphysics of music provides many parallels to the views presented in the previous sections. Schopenhauer was a musician himself, and writings on music indicate an at least superficial knowledge of harmony. Schopenhauer's discussion of harmony and rhythm is quite similar to Cooke's, and his notion of will and desire is comparable to Meyer's tendencies and expectations. Schopenhauer throws in an added metaphysical element: music as presenting the fundamental nature of the world, Will.

Schopenhauer regarded himself as the successor of Kant, revising and completing his philosophy: he accepts the Kantian distinction between the thing-in-itself and appearance. But where Kant described the "thing-in-itself" as unknowable, Schopenhauer argued that this inner essence could be "indirectly" known, especially its nature, through things like chemistry, anatomy, and art.⁷⁷ This "thing-in-itself" or inner essence of everything is "Will." The Will itself is "devoid of knowledge, and is only a

⁷⁷ Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, Vol. II, p. 298-299

blind, irresistible urge” of which the phenomenal world is but a “shadow.”⁷⁸ Human will is the phenomenal manifestation of this Will. He states: “Our bodies are literally...the phenomenal representation of our wills...and these wills are not subject to the constraint of reason...”⁷⁹

Schopenhauer introduces, more or less, the Platonic notion of Ideas into his philosophy. But contra Plato, these ideas are not the fundamental things-- they are still phenomenal representations of the Will. These Ideas, however, reveal the “objective character” of things; it is “thus the complete expression of the essence that exhibits itself to perception as object...The Idea...is the complete and perfect *phenomenon*.”⁸⁰ Ideas are the “objectification” of the Will. Schopenhauer has been criticized for this notion of Idea.⁸¹ As Michael Tanner comments, Schopenhauer’s appeal to Ideas is due in part to reverence philosophers have assigned knowledge of “universals” as opposed to knowledge of “particulars.”⁸² Nevertheless, art makes vivid these Ideas; “it presents images of Ideas purely, uncluttered and undistorted by conceptual abstractness.”⁸³

Schopenhauer discusses different forms of art- architecture, painting, sculpture, and poetry. Schopenhauer regards music, however, as the highest form of art. Unlike other forms of art, which depict clear objectifications of Ideas of the Will, music presents the underlying thing-in-itself, the Will. Thus, music is not a “representation” of the Will, but operates as the Will itself. Schopenhauer states: “...[Music is] but a *copy of the will itself*, the objectivity of which are the Ideas. For this reason the effect of music is so very

⁷⁸ Ibid., Vol. I, p. 275

⁷⁹ Tanner, p. 11

⁸⁰ Ibid., Vol. II, p. 364

⁸¹ See Michael Tanner *Schopenhauer: Metaphysics and Art*, and Cheryl Foster “Ideas and Imagination: Schopenhauer on the Proper Foundation of Art”

⁸² Tanner, p. 36

⁸³ Bowman, p. 117

much more powerful and penetrating than is that of the other arts, for these others speak only of the shadow, but music of the essence.”⁸⁴ The metaphysics of Schopenhauer’s view might be off-putting to many, but what is truly interesting is the way he depicts the *inner* meaning of music as relating to this metaphysical notion.

What is this inner meaning and how does this discussion relate to emotions?

Schopenhauer states that music presents emotions as “...*themselves*, to a certain extent in the abstract, their essential nature...”⁸⁵ In other words, like Meyer and Cooke, he is concerned with the piece of music itself, and how it relates to the listener in the musical experience, not after the fact discussion of emotion. What is important, however, is how Schopenhauer relates this metaphysical understanding to human will. Just as the will of humans strives and yearns, becomes satiated, and then strives again, so does music. He states that music is a “constant digression and deviation” expressing “the many different forms of the will’s effort.”⁸⁶ Schopenhauer’s view is an intellectual view of emotion in music, similar to Meyer’s notion of expectations (expecting, desiring to get back to the home key). “...Where in real life and its terrors our *will itself* is that which is roused and tormented, we are then not concerned with tones and their numerical relations; on the contrary, we ourselves are now the vibrating string that is stretched and plucked.”⁸⁷ This is truly a remarkable statement, one that foreshadows Meyer. Thus, through the striving of the physical processes that underlie the music, something like emotion is depicted, but to Schopenhauer, it is mistaken to call it *that* emotion, itself. In this way, it is comparable to Meyer’s interest in embodied meaning, or meaning arising from the music itself.

⁸⁴ Schopenhauer, Vol. I, p. 257

⁸⁵ Ibid., Vol. I, p. 261

⁸⁶ Ibid., Vol. I, p. 260

⁸⁷ Ibid., Vol. II, p. 451

Meaning in music, based on Schopenhauer's system, is exhibited in music's reflection of the inner essence of things, Will. How does this "striving" exhibit itself in the music? Schopenhauer mostly bases his discussion around harmony, and the Western understanding of the tonal system. As with Cooke, Schopenhauer refers to a particular key, or note, as the center of a musical work. The remaining notes are then arranged in a series of relationships to this single note, or tonic. Thus harmonic analysis proceeds in identifying the relationships of these tones with the primary one.⁸⁸ Thus the physical process of music, according to Schopenhauer, is a set of vertical harmonic progressions, taking place over the vertical rhythmic progressions of time. Schopenhauer bases his analysis of harmony on the physical process of vibrations of tones.

Schopenhauer argues that harmony is either consonant or dissonant, based on the rational or irrational relationship between two tones. In other words, a consonant harmony is any number that can be expressed as a fraction, while a dissonant harmony cannot be expressed as a fraction. He states: "...Music is a means of making intelligible rational and irrational numerical relations, not, like arithmetic, with the aid of the concept, but by bringing them to a knowledge that is quite direct and simultaneously affects the senses."⁸⁹ Dissonance, because it is irrational, has difficulty being "apprehended" by the listener, and thus is likened to the human will being frustrated. In other words, the human will takes up this dissonant relationship, becoming sublimated into it. In this way it represents the frustration of the will, since the mind seeks consonance. Thus, as dissonance is opposed to consonance, and dissonant harmonic relationship represent a desire to be completed, or made "consonant" or intelligible.

⁸⁸ Atonal music received much attention in the twentieth century. Not surprisingly, it refers to music without a clear tonal center. See Norton Anthology of Western music

⁸⁹ Schopenhauer, Vol. II, p. 450-451

Also interesting is the place given to rhythm by Schopenhauer. Indeed, music as experience unfolds over time; according to Schopenhauer, it is what “arranges” and “holds” music together.⁹⁰ Just as there is a fundamental note (the tonic), there are desirous points of time. These are the accented parts of a bar (a measure, or division in metrical units), occurring after a certain number of measures. Schopenhauer states that “discord” consists of the satisfaction of the harmonic element, but not the rhythmic, or vice-versa. Reconciliation, on the other hand, is the satisfaction of both of these elements; the harmony reaches a consonance on a “good” beat of the measure. Thus, satisfaction is delayed through continued dissonance, rhythmic variations, or the discord of these two (one is resolved and the other is not). Quoting Schopenhauer: “Music consists generally in a constant succession of chords more or less disquieting, i.e., of chords exciting desire, with chords more or less quieting and satisfying; just as the life of the heart (the will) is a constant succession of greater or lesser disquietude through desire or fear with composure in degrees just as varied.”⁹¹

Cheryl Foster comments that “will in the self is experienced as something *felt while* intellect considers it, rather than as something *located* representationally in the world.”⁹² On one hand, music presents the Will in its essential form, as striving for eventual satisfaction. Musical experience causes a listener to undergo certain feelings, relative to these “discords” and “reconciliations.” Despite the metaphysical underpinning that Schopenhauer invests to his view of music, there is an important thesis presented: music is a *felt* experience, and any feeling, or emotion, depends on the music, on what is going on within the music.

⁹⁰ Ibid., Vol. II., p. 453. Compare to Cooke’s notion that time is the “vehicle” for the music

⁹¹ Ibid., Vol. II., p. 456

⁹² Foster, p. 245

Section VI: Finale

Despite the metaphysical underpinnings of Schopenhauer's discussion of music, his view is quite similar to Meyer's. Both attempt an explanation of the formal elements of music as providing a basis for the emotional response. While Schopenhauer sees these "emotions" as expressed in an "essential" way, Meyer argues that musical feeling is a matter of "affect" and "arousal." For Meyer this arousal occurs because of expectations, and inhibitions of these expectations. Likewise, Schopenhauer argues that music is a matter of desire expressed musically, through the unrest of the harmonic system. Cooke also illustrates the musical basis of this harmonic unrest, but is more explicit in his use of particular emotional states. In other words, Meyer or Schopenhauer should clearly not be understood as arguing against the existence of musical emotions. Rather, they are explicating a formal understanding of how the music and the listener are related to one another. Instead of ignoring the elements of the music itself through talk of "symbols," or merely accepting the expression of emotions as self-evident, they seek to justify their presence musically.

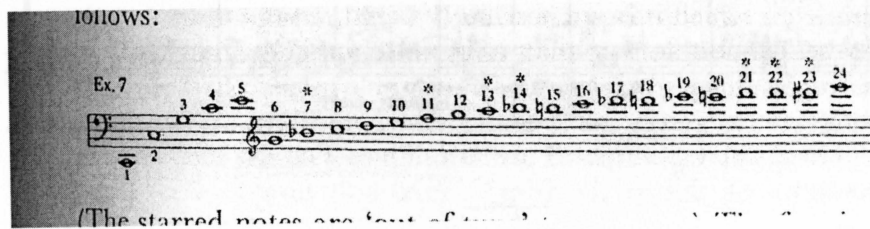
I have attempted to show that one need not abandon the music itself for feeling or emotion. This seems to be a general misunderstanding when one talks about "Romantic" music, Wagner, and emotions. One is accused of "sentimentality," or the exaggeration of the part emotion plays in musical experience. Surely this is misguided. One can talk meaningfully about emotions and music, without ignoring the elements of music. Moreover, these emotions need not be "all or nothing." Meyer's notion of arousal suggests that we can listen to a piece of music, enjoy it, and have a meaningful experience, without being moved to our depths.

Musical experience is a process; this much should be evident from the discussion of Meyer, Cooke, Goguen, and Schopenhauer. The number of individual elements that construct a piece of music is enormous, and as they are constantly changing, and so too is the musical experience. As Meyer points to the different relationships of "tendencies" in the music as signaling expectation, Goguen rightfully points to outside experience as coloring our reaction to a musical work. Again, this is not repeating Meyer's and Cooke's belief that expression and feeling are the result of stylistic boundaries and frameworks, though learned responses to these aspects constitutes musical experience. But more so, the events that shape our lives, the mood we are in, the general *zeitgeist*, shape it. Through a discussion of particular musical examples, I have hoped to show that not only emotions can be expressed in music, but they are done so through similar ways musically, based not only on style, but the acoustical series that makes up Western harmony.⁹³

Finally, I am sympathetic to Schopenhauer's metaphysical views. Music is such an important part of so many people's lives, that it seems only natural to search for deeper meanings. Of course, Meyer, Cooke, and Goguen do not require an adoption of metaphysics, which no doubt is appealing to some. But more importantly, in all of these views, meaning becomes a matter of felt experience understood by the intellect, not at odds with it. There need not be a dualistic approach that pits emotion against intellect, but rather integration that recognizes the felt and intellectual qualities of musical experience.

⁹³ See the discussion of Cooke

Appendix A: Musical Examples

Ex. 1: The Harmonic Series⁹⁴Ex. 2: Ludwig Van Beethoven, Symphony No. 3- II. Funeral March⁹⁵

E. E. 3605

Ex. 3- Anton Bruckner Symphony No. 4- II. Andante, mm. 1-5⁹⁶

Bratsche

Violoncell

Dämpfer

pp

p ausdrucksvoll

⁹⁴ Cooke, *The Language of Music*, p. 41

⁹⁵ Ludwig Van Beethoven, *Symphony No. 3*, London: Ernst Eulenburg Ltd

⁹⁶ Anton Bruckner, *Symphony No. 4 "Romantic,"* London: Ernst Eulenburg Ltd., p. 69

Ex. 4- Gustav Mahler, *Symphony No. 5, I (Trauermarsch)*, mm. 10-17⁹⁷

Musical score for Ex. 4, showing F-Hörner and B-Tromp. parts. The score includes dynamic markings such as *sf* and *sfz*, and a tempo marking *(Trio: flüchtig)*.

Ex. 5- Richard Wagner, *Götterdämmerung*, "Siegfried's Funeral March"⁹⁸

begins with the solemn theme of the mourning cortège:

Musical score for Ex. 5, showing a bass line with dynamic markings *sf* and *dim.*, and a tempo marking *No. 195*.

and then passes in slow review a number of motives associated

Ex. 6- Beethoven, *Symphony No. 6, IV. Sturm*⁹⁹

Musical score for Ex. 6, showing a piano part with dynamic markings *d* and *sf*.

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⁹⁷ Gustav Mahler, *Symphony No. 5*, London, Ernst Eulenburg Ltd., 1904, p. 4

⁹⁸ Newman, *The Wagner Operas*, p. 625

⁹⁹ Ludwig Van Beethoven, *Symphony No. 6*, London, Ernst Eulenburg Ltd

Ex. 7 Mahler, Symphony No. 5, II¹⁰⁰

Contra-Fagott
abwechselnd mit
drittem Fagott

Sechs Hörner in F

Vier Trompeten in F

rit. a tempo

a tempo

rit. a tempo

rit. fu tempo e loco

Ex. 8, Bruckner, 9th Symphony, II (Scherzo), mm. 42-50¹⁰¹

(a)

1,2 (F)

3,4 (F)

5,6 (F)

7,8 (B)

Tr (F)

1,2

Tbn.

3

Tuba

Timp.

ff

v

(b)

2,3

1

C1 (B)

2,3

Fg

σ 3

¹⁰⁰ Mahler, *Symphony No. 5*, London: Ernst Eulenburg Ltd.

¹⁰¹ Anton Bruckner, *Symphony No. 9*, London: Ernst Eulenburg Ltd.

Ex. 9: Beethoven, Symphony No. 9, III. Adagio Molto e Cantabile¹⁰²

Violino I *mesza voce*

Violino II *p*

Viola *p*

Violoncello *p*

Ex. 10: Mahler, Symphony No. 5, IV. Adagietto¹⁰³

Sehr langsam *pp* *molto rit.* *a tempo (molto Adagio)*

pfe

Violinen *molto rit.* *a tempo (sehr langsam)* *pp* *seelenvoll*

¹⁰² Ludwig Van Beethoven, *Symphony No. 9*, London: Ernst Eulenburg Ltd.

¹⁰³ Mahler, *Symphony No. 5*, London: Ernst Eulenburg Ltd.

Ex. 11- Bruckner, Symphony No. 7, II. (Adagio), m. 1-7¹⁰⁴

Violinen. I. *G Saite immerfort*
 Violinen. II.
 Bratschen. *hervortretend*
 Violoncelle. *divisi*
 Kontrabässe. *divisi*
 Dynamics: *p cresc.*, *sempre*, *dim.*, *mf*, *cresc. sempre*
 E. E. 3637

VI. *sehr markig*, *zart*
 Dynamics: *p dim.*, *cresc.*, *pp*
 etc.

Ex. 12- Parsifal- first theme ¹⁰⁵

No. I *espress. molto*
lento
 Dynamics: *p*, *f*, *p p i k p*
 Labels: A, B, C

¹⁰⁴ Anton Bruckner, *Symphony No. 7*, London: Ernst Eulenburg Lt.

¹⁰⁵ Ernest Newman, *The Wagner Operas*, Princeton: Princeton University Press (1949), p. 668

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