

**LANGUAGE, INEFFABILITY AND PARADOX  
IN MUSIC PHILOSOPHY**

by

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## ABSTRACT

Despite the direct communication that language may allow for in various art forms, it can be both help and hindrance when combined with music. Similarly, philosophical writings on music can be “mixed blessings.” They can negatively influence the choices of music in music education by prescriptive, sometimes censorious opinions and personal tastes. The educational institutionalization of band, choir and popular music demonstrates neither the desire nor the capacity to genuinely value the music or the individuality of the musicians involved. All music, despite the genre, may have profound individual meaning to us, as evidenced by Gilles Deleuze’s concept of the “refrain”. These meanings are frequently incapable of satisfactory explanation through human utterance but can express the inexpressible. Just as the absence or avoidance of language to describe music often spawns ignoble treatment by those who rely upon it almost exclusively, such is the frequent response to music lacking traditional notation.

## Dedication

To my mother Carol, father Hank  
and sister Karen for the life,  
to my partner Diane for the renewal,  
and to my sons Rory and Tor for the promise  
of the days yet to come.

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## Preface

“If you don’t admire something, if you don’t love it, you have no reason to write about it.” These words by Gilles Deleuze might be the guiding hand for the reader to grasp for what is about to follow. I have been obsessed, nay possessed, by all things musical since I can remember the remembering of anything. My grandfather Alfred Erickson was a folk fiddler of an oral custom harkening from Norway. His daughter, my mother Carol, is a pianist and organist in the classical music tradition. My father, a Lutheran minister, has a fierce love of Bach and Beethoven, which was instilled in me from infancy. These composers’ music was regularly played in the church, with my mother at the organ. My sister, now a classically trained oboist and marvelous teacher, sat with me during services where we learned to sing harmony through the many German chorales of Johann Sebastian Bach.

At our home, the music of Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughan, Mel Tormé, Dave Brubeck and Peter, Paul and Mary coexisted peacefully with “the classics”. As my sister and I grew up, the Beatles entered the scene. Then, through a school friend living on a farm with a record club membership, I heard Jimi Hendrix. His music changed my focus from not only listening to popular songs but to also listen for instrumental virtuosity. Hendrix’s playing had an ineffable effect upon me. I had reached the point of no return. I listened to, thought, read, talked, and dreamed about popular music.

For six years, I lived in a small town in North Dakota named Columbus where no music or instrument stores existed but there were two local bars. Country and

western music from jukeboxes spilled out of their doors every night except on Sundays. My only contact with current popular music I so desperately loved was initially heard only through the radio. On clear nights, you could get stations from Chicago, Illinois. This brought black urban music into my prairie home. Suddenly, the funk and soul I heard in Hendrix began to make sense. There were actually others out there that felt and played the same rhythms as he did.

Besides drumming in the school band, my sister and I began taking classical violin lessons from Arturo Petrucci, a teacher in the “big city” of Minot. It took over an hour to get there from Columbus and I looked forward to visiting music stores to get singles and albums more than I anticipated the inevitable violin lessons. Arturo begrudgingly taught acoustic guitar lessons, calling the instrument no end of names. I remember looking enviously at the teenaged student with his big guitar case, while waiting outside the Petrucci’s drawing room for my sister’s lesson to finish. That was the instrument that I *really* wanted to play but I continued on with the violin until my teacher’s incessant striking of my head with his bow, whenever I closed my eyes while playing, finally drove me to an act of desperation. One Saturday, before our weekly trek to lessons, I put nails behind the rear tires of our family car while it sat parked in the garage. Following an unprecedented “safety check” at my behest, it was deemed impossible to go to lessons that day or, thankfully for me, any day after that.

One might say I was a casualty of the classical tradition in my early musical education but I continue to the present day to greatly admire the music. I went on to play percussion in university, community and opera pit orchestras while playing drums in various jazz, funk and rock bands. Drummers, I have found out, are

probably the most common musical “cross dressers” there are. They don’t seem to get much respect from fellow players in any style so they often dabble in them all when given the opportunity. Presently a teacher of “general music” in a middle school, I find my experiences in these musics lend a steadying hand to those varied backgrounds my many students bring with them. It is to those musicians of the past, present and future that I owe special thanks for allowing me to play with you.

## **Introduction**

Music making is an activity that is common to each culture on earth. With the exception of our Western music tradition, music in other cultures is something that is part of, and not divorced from, the lives of ordinary people. The reliance upon specialist musicians, critics and educators in our Western music tradition has, over time, removed the need for music making from the average person and given it to the hands of specialists, itself a product of scientific positivism. Our reliance upon positivism may be justified because through it, we have arguably benefited from many good things in our society. However, because of this positivism, music, as an invisible art, has specifically suffered a crisis in a number of critical areas.

According to John Dewey (1934), many artists and their music of the twentieth century have become idiosyncratic to the point of complete isolation. Using the example of the Second Viennese School of Arnold Schönberg, music making often became a grand strategy of numerological manipulations on paper, then rehearsing this difficult music with musicians who couldn't properly play it and performing it poorly in the concert halls, often to violently negative public reactions. This isolationism, justified by the still prevailing aesthetic of music as "object" or "knowledge" that positivism itself has wrought, must somehow adapt itself to the "gallery of music": the concert hall. Yet, the crisis has reached there, too.

Rather than look backwards to the possible causes of this situation, the symptoms of this illness have themselves been exhibited. Gunther Schuller and Leonard Bernstein have addressed a lack of empathy for this new music, as well as

the apathy and joylessness not only shown by the audience in the face of this malady but by the musicians themselves playing the music. In order to heal only the orchestra and the audience because, as Edgar Varèse declared in July of 1921, “The present-day composer refuses to die!” (Zappa, 1967), public education must proceed accordingly. Using the example of Bernstein’s television programs *Omnibus* and *Young People’s Concerts*, as well as his publicly televised *Harvard Lectures*, I shall endeavour to use examples of the musics of opera, jazz and popular music in arguing that it is our own experience of music which is vital and that the ability of words to express just why this is important to us is often insufficient to convey. As a result of our historically repeated positivistic habits, this inarticulateness is deemed negative, if not ignorant, by musicologists used to generating copious amounts of writing on the subject of music and how to correctly respond to it.

These prescriptions are notably evident, to varying degrees, in the writings and philosophies of Theodor Adorno, Leonard Bernstein, Peter Kivy, Allan Bloom and Roger Scruton as a result of a tacit acceptance that scientific positivism is the correct paradigm required with which to “see” the arts. Many of their writings extend into outright censorious and elitist positions which, as a result, threaten to negate one’s own personal experience of music. Even the legitimacy and permissibility of opera, so often considered the preeminent musical art form, are called into question through a philosophy which more often parallels the analysis of society’s division of labour than it constitutes an open-minded aesthetic (Kivy, 1988, 1990). The ramifications these positions have on music education are many and serious. Current writings of Yaroslav Senyshyn, Theodore Gracyk and Thomas Regelski point to the

elitism and hypocrisy of the “officers of taste” which are used to guide music education. These same “officials” provide examples of how their own personal tastes, through their positions of power in the educational community, can become dictatorial and exclusive of the varied musical choices and tastes of the overall public.

The concept of the individual “ritournelle”, as suggested by Gilles Deleuze, is applied to ensphere these individual manifestations or “ritournelles”. I argue that much of the music criticism and philosophy that is accepted as truth is ultimately based upon the personal tastes of these same writers and not on any so-called objective state that music might hold for us. Divorced from these subjective prescriptions by musicologists or philosophers as to what is deemed “good” or “bad,” the greatest danger these opinions pose is when they become recognized by arts educators as universal truths and result in marginalizing or censorious policies which become imbedded in their teaching.

All musics, whether they be opera, “pure” or “absolute” music, jazz or popular music, may have profound individual meanings to us. These meanings are frequently not capable of explanation through human utterance but can express the inexpressible. Just as the absence or avoidance of language to describe music often spawns ignoble treatment by those that rely upon it almost exclusively, so is the response to musics lacking traditional notation. The more invisible the apparent means of the music, the more it is debased by a persuasive and powerful group of intellectuals and musicologists, due to it not fitting their definition of “music as knowledge.” Even some examples of modern art music, which allow a certain variability in performance by the musicians, are derided by those who wish to

maintain the realm of control firmly within the composer's grasp. The impression that a composer's score or a conductor might actually wield this kind of power is put in question, pointing out that art music performances can often mislead us to deny that "co-authorship" always exists at some level. Interpretive idiosyncrasies are unavoidable in any area of human musical endeavour, be it a solo instrument (Senyshyn, 1996) or an opera (Senyshyn & Vézina, 2002).

On the other hand, popular musics which do find public support, such as jazz or rock, are said to appeal to a sentient, Dionysian element which, criticized since ancient times, is met today with the same derision from much of the art music world. Outright censorship of popular music has been promoted by a number of music philosophers and sociologists, often contradicting themselves when their own personal tastes become their arguments to silence other forms or styles of musical expression. In arts education, these same censors are present in the maintenance of music programs, which are drawn from the well of scientific positivism. From it, spring paradigms brimming with elitist and exclusive methodologies in music education (Regelski, 1994, 1998, 2003).

Paradoxically, some of these same writers have advanced censorious paradigms of their own, defending their actions with their own interpretation of critical theory, turning it into another dogma to suit their purposes. Those who would substitute the paradigm of popular music for the tradition of Western music in schools come dangerously close to totalitarianism, made all the more ironic when their critical theory models came from the Frankfurt Institute, many of its theorists being exiles themselves. Despite reasonable claims and rationales that the Western paradigm be

significantly altered, the intrusive exchange of one ideology for another is fraught with paradox.

Educators who do not reduce their only possible choices to an “either-or” paradigm, (Green, 2003) question the complete exclusion of these inherent positivist ideologies from education, putting forth the argument that their various paths may cross at any time (Jorgensen, 2004). However, institutionalized music is criticized for offering little support for the visible musics evident in the communities they are part of (Jones, 2003). Moreover, institutionalized music education has neither the desire nor the capacity to genuinely value the music or the individuality of the musicians involved (Swanwick, 1999). The concept of the Deleuzian “ritournelle”, immune from the effects of institutionalized music, can be redemptive for the individual. The individual’s music of the “ritournelle”, often springing forth from popular music, and from the art music advanced through the Western tradition, might therefore coexist, by allowing self-determination through one’s own musical tastes and choices. Neither position can deny being immune from informing, or being informed by, the other.



## Part I: Foreign Language

**What music can't do, opera can't do.**

*Peter Kivy (1988)*

**While for the drama there are almost boundless possibilities of material, it seems that for opera the only suitable subjects are such as could not exist or reach complete expression without music – which demand music and only become complete through it.**

*Ferruccio Busoni (1921)*

**Facilius per partes in cognitionem totius adducimur**

***We are more easily led part by part to an understanding of the whole.***

*Lucius Annaeus Seneca (circa. 50 A.D.)*

**THE Real is one; the wise call it by many names.**

*Unknown Vedic seer (circa. 1000 B.C.)*

The position held by music philosopher Peter Kivy that music, using opera or any other form of theatre that has music attached to it, is not powerful or complex enough to address “genuine conflicts in the world of human affairs” (Kivy 1988) as can drama. Kivy contends that the conflicts in musical, not linguistic, materials are resolvable whereas the issues in dramatic conflict are most often not easily resolved. To Kivy, the only demonstration of musical truths is through “pure” instrumental music just as he believes that dramatic text remain free from what he considers to be limiting influences when notes are attached to it. Contrastingly, the musician-writers Leonard Bernstein, Ferruccio Busoni and Yaroslav Senyshyn do not seek to marginalize either text or music, nor do they find need to subjugate one to the other. Instead, they welcome a communion of word and note and, in their writing, exude a sense of awe and wonder in the indeterminate power and mystery that result through that communion. This unity has many names given to it. Busoni intones it as

“Oneness” (Busoni, 1921), Senyshyn describes it as “the drama of being and music” (Senyshen & Vézina, 2002) and Bernstein speaks of “simultaneous singing” being capable of an “expansion of reality” in opera. (Bernstein, 1958) Using the example of *Wozzeck*, Alban Berg’s operatic revision of Georg Büchner’s play *Woyzeck*, Theodor Adorno refers to the music as allowing “the transformation of a realistic draft into one that crackles with hidden meanings, in which everything held back in words insures a gain in content.” It is the intention of this writer to state the efficacy of Kivy’s proposition while challenging his assertion that music amidst text is powerless and shallow. Despite Kivy’s credo “What music can’t do, opera can’t do,” a focus upon what music can do, rather than what it cannot do as it merges with word and other elements inherent in performance, will be advanced in the first part of this paper.

In his book *Osmin’s Rage: Philosophical Reflections on Opera, Drama and Text* (1988), Peter Kivy’s criticisms of opera as being a benign musical form is centred around a kind of reductionism that opera is merely a combination of text and sound. Despite other human senses such as sight and smell that are alive during opera experience, Kivy narrows his focus too far and fails to notice the indescribable power that comprises opera. Ellen Burns, in a puzzling, self-constructed irony entitled “*When 1 + 1 = 1: An Interartistic Aesthetic for Opera*” (1998), begins her analysis on opera with the promising words:

Any aesthetic method that would allow an “interartistic” experience of opera must refer to all its elements. Music, the subjective element, must be perceived with the objective elements-literature and *mise-en-scène*- before any percipient can experience the work in its totality. Such an aesthetic would elaborate on the law of qualitative summation, wherein+ the whole is greater according to the Gestalt dictum, in the aesthetic equation, one (score) plus one (libretto) equals one (total work), or opera (p. 49).

Ironically, Burns, like Kivy, ultimately ignores the “totality” of the work’s experience by reducing the opera to the score and not its realization through performance. Senyshyn and Vézina (2002) suggest that attempts to describe and define this experience, using the elements of only text and music, are limiting and foolish:

Much is at stake in terms of aesthetics, creativity, and imagination if performance is to collapse into text, not least the role of creator, performer, and audience. The most obvious fact being that ‘performance’ becomes an object itself, it becomes regarded as a static/neutral event, dulled in sensation by a certain lack of a living and breathing moment; it is a fossilized trace. Rather, to perform the text in reciprocal co-authorship means to bring forward an immediacy of passion, an infusion of imagination, and a possible realm of understanding for both performer and audience that orbits beyond the blueprint of text and symbol (pp. 27 - 28).

The opera score, devoid of human realization or “co-authorship” through performance, becomes “a kind of a permanent document etched in stone and thus a holy, absolute, and sacrosanct icon of worship.” (p. 27). Sandra Corse, in her book *Operatic Subjects*, exercises similar caution when reducing opera to word and music:

We should certainly remember, too, that both the text and music of an opera are meaningless outside of their dramatic context, and to discuss them as mutually exclusive is to omit consideration of what is most important - theater. Theater is a cultural discourse that serves a number of functions - communal, celebratory, critical - and music, visual effects, text, styles of acting, and the physical layout of the theater are all historical variables that allow a particular theatrical experience to serve its purpose in a singular way (p. 36).

Returning to Ellen Burns’ article on “an inter-artistic aesthetic for opera”, she applies a “formula” based upon four postulates by Eugene Kaelin in his work *An Aesthetic for Art Educators*. Kaelin applies a “phenomenological reduction of the

physical work of art” (p. 78). Despite seemingly good intentions on the part of Burns to convert Kaelin’s prescription of a physical art experience into one embracing the opera, Burns attempts at formulaic reductionism are ultimately misguided. Kaelin is referring to a physical art object such as a painting but not a humanly realized event of such visible and invisible complexity as an opera performance. Furthermore, Burns dangerously errs in advocating the censorship of other interpretations of opera. Using the example of Mozart’s *The Magic Flute*, Burns promotes usage of Kaelin’s third postulate:

*P3: No single counter of an aesthetic context possesses an absolute (non-relative) significance. Expressed affirmatively: every counter of an aesthetic context has only that significance within context as accrues to it by virtue of a relationship with another counter...any preference for a given work based upon an absolute value attributed to a single counter or set of counters of the context is an example of the “reductionist fallacy” (Kaelin, p. 77).*

In interpretations of *The Magic Flute* that Burns believed to be in violation of “absolutized elements” (Burns, p. 50), application of Kaelin’s third postulate would “prohibit censorious interpretations wherein the interpretation - or judgement, or censorship - of the work results from absolutizing a single counter” (p. 50). Despite Burns’ zeal to rid interpretations which may contain elements resulting in “sexist or racist experiences of the operas”, advocacy of censorship in the arts bears some careful forethought. Heidi Westerlund, in an article reflecting her reading of John Dewey entitled “*Reconsidering Aesthetic Experience In Praxial Music Experience*”, suggests that an art form such as opera, one highly dependent upon integration of elements, might not always need to avoid controversy if it is to be meaningful to its audience:

In this integration, parts are no less than the whole and the whole is not simply a sum of its parts. For example, the political aspects of music do not make music less aesthetic nor does the political aspect disappear when music is experienced as aesthetic. Being political is one aspect of how music makes sense. Music being simultaneously artistic and political captures something of our manifold world that in a particular context gets its resonance and becomes an experience, a good experience, that transforms life in that context (p. 50).

In his book *Art as Experience*, John Dewey comments on Plato's advocacy of artistic censorship due to the immediacy of the arts in Athenian daily life:

The idea would not have occurred to any one had art been remote from the interests of life. For the doctrine did not signify that art was a literal copying of objects, but that it reflected the emotions and ideas that are associated with the chief institutions of social life. Plato felt this connection so strongly that it led him to his idea of the necessity of censorship of poets, dramatists, and musicians. Perhaps he exaggerated when he said that a change from the Doric to the Lydian mode in music would be the sure precursor of civic degeneration. But no contemporary would have doubted that music was an integral part of the ethos and the institutions of the community. The idea of "art for art's sake" would not have even been understood (pp. 7-8).

Dewey goes on to examine the shift in the close role the arts once played in daily life to that of "the compartmental conception of fine art" (p. 8) we have inherited due to the rise of modern industry and commerce:

Because of changes in industrial conditions the artist has been pushed to one side from the main streams of active interest. Industry has been mechanized and an artist cannot work mechanically for mass production. He is less integrated than formerly in the normal flow of social services...Put the action of all such forces together, and the conditions that create the gulf which exists generally between producer and consumer in modern society operate to create also a chasm between ordinary and esthetic experience. Finally, as the record of this chasm, accepted as if it were normal, the philosophies of art that locate it in a region inhabited by no other creature and that emphasize beyond all reason the merely contemplative character of the esthetic (pp. 9-10).

It is this “contemplative character” that the opera score has become to many music philosophers. To them, the score is an art object which is denied life through daring, possibly heretical productions which, as Westerlund suggests, might obtain their “resonance” and become “an experience, a good experience, that transforms life in that context” (p. 50). Contrary to Helen Burns’ censorship-promoting, reductionist manipulations of Eugene Kaelin’s postulates on a physical art object, the opera score needs to escape from the uninhabited regions, alluded to by Dewey, to which these kinds of philosophies have long sought to imprison it.

I now wish to examine the opera as an example of an art form that, historically, has been highly scrutinized and censored to the extent of disallowing the possibilities of this medium from extending its expressive potential. For this purpose, the censorship of theatre during the Reformation period in England will be discussed. The ability of theatre music to withstand banishment during a time when plays themselves were not allowed to be performed shall be advanced as one way that musical expression is often perceived to be ambiguous, compared to dramatic expression. The ambiguity itself, I suggest, is the result of a tendency to apply the logic of language, and the expectations one has of it, to the “logic” of music. The subservient relation of music to drama, and the censorious implications this suggests through the writings of Peter Kivy, result from the misleading notion that musical and dramatic expression are ultimately based upon similar models of conflict and its resolution.

The expression of emotion through song has been and continues to be a topic of much debate among philosophers of music. The concept that our emotions can be

more directly articulated through song, rather than words alone, will be examined as it relates to sixteenth and seventeenth century song and opera. Musical experience and the subsequent attempt to describe it have historically taken on a variety of forms. The concept that music possesses such extraordinary power to the extent of actually controlling one's thoughts and feelings is certainly not a new one. Plato, in the *Republic*, believed the arts were important enough in intellectual and moral development that they warranted censorship. According to Robert Walker in *Musical Beliefs*, music was, for Plato, "presented more as a tool of the state in achieving a perfect society than simply as an aesthetic activity" (p.105). Walker has pointed out that Plato "did not argue whether or not music has such power; he assumed that it does" (p.105).

It is precisely this tacit acceptance of music having innately universal expressive power that Kivy finds compelling enough upon which to elucidate his theory on musical expressiveness. In his book *The Corded Shell: Reflections on Musical Expression*, Kivy (1980) draws attention to the importance of certain theories of a number of sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth century writers on musical expressiveness. The first important group of writers came from Florence around 1580 in the palace of Count Giovanni Bardi. This "Camerata" of Florentine intellectuals reportedly theorized before setting their ideas to music and were interested in the possibilities of a new musical style in imitation of the ancient Greek drama. This was a "misguided attempt" to Kivy, despite the praise of music historian Manfred Bukofzer, in his book *Music in the Baroque Era*, that the Camerata was responsible for one of "the few musical innovations in which theory antedates practice" (p. 112).

The theory of the Camerata, to which Kivy lends such great importance in the distillation of his own theory of musical expression, is referred to by Kivy as the “arousal” or “speech theory” of musical expression. Composers such as Pietro de’ Bardi, Giulio Caccini, Vincenzo Galilei (father of the astronomer and physicist Galileo), and Jacopo Peri sought to imitate what they believed was done in ancient Greek drama, namely, to follow the rise and fall of the speaking voice “as it expresses the emotions of the speaker, resulting in a musical line distinctly nonmelodic in nature” (Kivy, 1980). It is historically significant to note that, according to the Harvard Dictionary of Music, the examples of written “expression marks” in music, prior to the Camerata period, relate to expression being more “physically measurable” properties of music, such as tempo or speed markings and dynamic or loudness indicators in the music. In the late sixteenth century, expression markings were no longer solely associated with so-called “physical” properties of music. Composers began including descriptions of the “character” or the “mood” of a composition. Terms like “passionately”, “tenderly”, “with spirit” or “with feeling” began to regularly appear in scored music at the time of the Florentine Camerata. This “emotive” amendment to the original use of expression marks continues to the present day.

Kivy points out a lack of consistency in the proponents of this “speech theory” concerning the “relationship of the emotions ‘represented’ in music and the emotions ‘felt’ by its auditors”(p. 21). This same dualism is evident in the current *British Columbia Education Ministry Music Integrated Resource Package (IRP)*, with its mirrored learning outcomes purporting that music not only expresses the emotions of



the artist or creator, as well that music affects the thoughts, images and feelings of its listeners. Kivy might comment that the *IRP* is a “misguided attempt”, as he believed the Camerata was. Kivy (1980) argued, “if I express grief, it may arouse pity. If music is expressive of grief, might it not also arouse pity rather than grief?” (p. 24)

Kivy further criticized the speech theory by providing the following argument:

To be sure, the speech theory alone is not an adequate account of musical expressiveness, first, because not all such musical expressiveness lies in musical resemblance of expressive behavior; second, because human speech is not the only aspect of our emotive life that music can resemble (p 26).

Kivy (1980) cites the writings of the seventeenth and eighteenth century philosophers Hobbes, Spinoza, Locke, and Hume as the theoretical precursors of another theory of musical expression, culminating in the writings of the English music theorist Charles Avison, known for his “association of ideas” theory of musical expression. Kivy (1980) summarized this theory as follows:

It (the theory of the association of ideas) arises from the trivial and true observation that we tend, other things being equal, to think of *B*, after perceiving or experiencing or thinking of *A*, if, in the past, we perceived or experienced *A* and *B* together; or tend to feel a certain way, all things being equal, when we perceive or experience or think of *A*, if we felt that way in the past when we perceived or experienced *A* (p. 29).

Kivy believes Avison has an important way of defining musical expression, despite his shortcomings, quite distinct from the earlier “speech theorists” discussed previously. Avison argues in *An Essay on Musical Expression* (1752) that sounds can remind us of events, or places, or experiences in our pasts. Music does not directly arouse our emotions but the images and remembrances of things past which the music stimulates (Kivy, 1980, p. 30). Where Avison has a major flaw in his theory,

according to Kivy, is in his belief that the feeling or emotion we associate with those images, events, places or experiences will be the same with everyone.

The aforementioned attempts, “speech theory” and “association of ideas”, to define musical expression have direct bearing upon Kivy’s own theory. A main concern relative to Kivy’s argument is hereby quoted at length:

Music can be *expressive of* emotions; it is not a theory of how music can *express* them. That is because music does not, I think, ordinarily express them...I want to present a theory of what is going on when we describe music in emotive terms, in the absence of any suggestion that it is expressing the composer’s emotions, or anyone else’s. For we describe music emotively even when it is perfectly clear that the music is not (and cannot be) expressing emotions we ascribe to it, or when we have no way of knowing whether it expresses those emotions because we have no way of knowing what emotive state the composer was in when he wrote it. That is to say, many, and perhaps most, of our emotive descriptions are logically independent of the states of mind of the composers of that music...(p.14).

Despite the theoretical challenges given by the Florentine Camerata, music throughout the seventeenth century continued to be viewed primarily as subordinate to the text. Kivy, in his book *Music Alone (1990)*, suggests that to attempt an understanding of the emotive qualities that music may or may not possess, one must examine “pure” instrumental music and not music that has been applied to something like a drama or a story. Kivy points out the significance of the rise in instrumental music during the Enlightenment period, during which time, a type of musical analysis which challenged the speech or “arousal” theory came on the scene. Kivy refers to this new way of analyzing music as “musical cognitivism” (p.146).

Thomas Reid, an associate of the Scottish School of Common Sense, was a major figure in this new musical cognitivism. To Kivy (1980), the element of cognition in musical analysis was new at the time because the expressiveness of

music lay in the recognition of the emotions and not in feeling them. This theory was still closely linked to the speech theory, espoused by members of the Camerata, because it maintained that passionate speech was very much tied up in musical expression (pp. 24-25).

The influence of the Camerata's speech theory throughout continental Europe in opera and songs finally found its way to England through the likes of Reid and his "Scottish School of Common Sense" as well as through aristocrats and royalty returning from travels abroad. Prior to this, music was employed in theatre as *intermedi*. According to Alun Davies in *The Hellenism of Early Opera*, this was "incidental music with words for various kinds of festivals and entertainment, usually to do with a court, and for plays. They developed into *entr'actes* that became more elaborate than the play itself" (p. 35). Music ceased to merely serve as time filler during which scene or costume changes take place. According to Donald Grout in *A History of Western Music* (1988), theatre music in England was there:

...not because the English composers or public especially wanted operas, but because, although plays were prohibited, a play set to music could be called a "concert" and so avoid the ban. After the Restoration this pretext was no longer necessary, and thus nearly all of the English "semi-operas" of the seventeenth century were really plays with a large proportion of vocal solos and ensembles, choruses, and instrumental music of all kinds (p.415).

The reaction of a sizeable amount of English theatre critics to "opera", transplanted partially in deference to the continental tastes acquired by the theatre company's patron King Charles II during his exile, were not wildly positive. The writer Roger North, who is credited with authorship of the term "semi-opera" used above, states they, "were called Operas but had bin more properly styled Semi-

operas, for they consisted of half Musick, and half Drama” (Wilson, p. 307). As stated in John Wilson’s book *Roger North on Music* (1959), North identifies what he views is a “deadly flaw” inherent in this new form:

...there is a fatal objection to all these ambigue (sic) entertainments: they break unity and distract the audience. Some come for the play and hate the music, others come only for the music, and the drama is penance to them, and scarce any are well reconciled to both (p. 307).

In his book *Henry Purcell and the Restoration Theatre*, Robert Moore (1961) expounds upon the prevailing sentiment by English critics and audiences that here, in this “semi-opera”, was a foreign and unwelcome form:

The public wanted both music and drama, but separately...In short, music, appealing to the senses rather than the sense, could not be the language of an English hero; the singers could sing, but he at least must speak. Though the national drama for Italy might be the drama of music, in England it could never be anything but the drama of poetry (p. 33).

The marriage of the royal court-based masque, the English art form of theatre, French *ballet* and the grand opera of Italy was not a simple combination of forms. It was the adherence to the speech theory of the Florentine Camerata which was key to the opera in Italy. Song must follow the emotion and patterns of speech as a way for the composer to adhere to the seventeenth century belief that ancient Greece held the secret to a most perfect art form. In his *Roscius Anglicanus* (1704), one can see the influence of speech theory in a statement by John Downes, a spectator of Henry Purcell’s *The Fairy Queen*, an adaptation of Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. Downes says this:

There being this difference only between an Opera and a Tragedy; that the one is a Story sung with a proper Action, the other spoken. And he must be a very ignorant player who knows not there is a Musical

Cadence in speaking; and that a man may as well speak out of Tune, as sing out of Tune (p. 340).

In his book *Making Theatre*, Peter Mudford (2000) draws a similar conclusion that the English actor has an “innate musicality” in the manner of delivery of lines.

Mudford, using the language of music, upholds the power of the script in drama:

The actor who plays to the audience by ad-libbing, or deliberately upstaging others on stage whether by ham or ‘great acting’ breaks this internal rhythm. An actor who is miscast will not fail only because of an inability to imitate the part, but because his performance will sound out of tune with the rest. The physical expression, and speaking of the lines, have to fuse as in a symphony with all the other players in the performance (p. 170).

David Hornbrook (1998) might concur with Mudford in a criticism of extemporization in drama, stating that “dramatic art, however, does not regard improvisation as a precious manifestation of the creative spirit”(p. 135). While I agree that acting can have parallels to musical performance, most often in the form of the *language* used on the page and in our necessary human urges to describe what we experience, I believe that by making these comparisons, Mudford is in danger of reducing the power of words to a mere “sound experience”. Peter Kivy, in his book *Osmin’s Rage: Philosophical Reflections on Opera, Drama and Text* (1988), offers a reason for this common kind of reductionism of drama to music:

The reason drama is such an available material for transmutation into music is that both drama and music have as their deepest and most pervasive aesthetic feature the generation and resolution of conflict, the building and releasing of tension...But drama becomes music more readily because, at the core, the “semantics” of drama and the “syntax” of music embody the same principle. And the relation, by the way, is reflexive. Talk about music falls so easily into the dramatic mode for the very same reason that drama so often falls into the musical. The temptation to see purely musical conflict and resolution as “drama” is merely the reverse of the centuries-old urge to transmute drama into pure musical form (pp. 281-282).

This leads to Kivy's motto for the book: "What music can't do, opera can't do" (p. 274). In the end, he resolves that musical conflict is simply not the same as dramatic tension or conflict. In addition to this, Kivy uses the example of the trials of an opera audience member who hasn't the requisite background or experience with the text used in the opera, even if the language used in the opera is in the audience member's mother tongue:

He had better concentrate very hard indeed on what words are being enunciated by the man who sings the part; and good luck to him - for we all know, from our own experiences of opera, that it is well-nigh impossible to understand in any great detail, even in our native language, the words that opera singers sing. What we will hear, no matter how hard he concentrates, will be only part of the text, and that through a glass darkly, obscured by the music (p. 270).

I believe it is this objection to the lack of intelligibility of the text, hence, the lack of a perceived unified, dramatic form that Restoration writers such as North and Downes were meaning. The music tended to dilute the power, the message and the unity of the drama they wished to see and, most importantly, wished to understand. Despite my own preference of music over drama as an art form, likely due to my greater frequency of exposure to music than to drama as I developed artistic tastes as a child and young person, I can respect the value some artists and writers place upon the so-called sanctity of certain art forms which must be kept free of "disruptive influences". It appears that the inclusion of music in Restoration theatre might fall very much into this category.

So why, after 20 years of closures, did the dramatic re-opening of the theatres have virtually all plays supplemented by music? There are historians (Bevis, 1988), (Hubner, 1992) who argue that it was through royal patronage and the imposition of

royal tastes that made this possible. I would also argue that it was the very volatile political nature of the art of non-musical drama that the monarchy of Charles II was trying to avoid by doing two things. Firstly, by reopening the theatres, following a long period of civil wars and puritanical reforms, the monarchy was perceived by the theatre-going public as a tolerant power. Secondly, music interspersed in a drama that might be highly charged with a subversive political nature might be lost of its focus and diluted of its propulsive power, much like watching a movie on television is for me when it is littered with commercials. Robert Moore (1961) refers to this trend or “Baroque ideal” in Restoration theatre, noting that “the sense of violence and even eruption is held in control by a masterly and masterful formal technique” (p. 5). Interestingly enough, by requiring larger musical forces, one might see how the government in power could forgo theatre closures by eliminating the pit, where the “underlings” previously sat. These were largely educated, often elite patrons who were presumed to pose political danger when they attended plays. Previously, musicians sat in an adjacent gallery if, indeed, they were required at all. Thus, the precursor to the orchestra pit was established and, perhaps also; a device for crowd control.

In his book *Politics, Plague, and Shakespeare's Theater* (1991), Leeds Barrol points out too that the royalty regularly closed theatres during times of real and concocted outbreaks of the plague in London. According to Barrol, this was done so the royalty could retire to the less populated English countryside and, thus, avoid the greater chance of coming into contact with the contagion. This also served the purpose of the monarchy avoiding civil unrest when the target group, the theatregoer,

met and stirred up trouble. Wilhelm Creizenach, in his book *The English Drama in the Age of Shakespeare*, has this twisted logic to report regarding playhouse closures:

...acting during an epidemic of the plague increases the danger of infection; and that acting during periods of freedom from plague is apt to draw down the disease as a punishment from Heaven. They further think it dangerous that players who have acted in public during a time of plague should approach the Queen's person (p. 7).

The city fathers during this time point out the political power that English drama had over other art forms such as music by their attitude toward actors, stating "so far as their livelihood is concerned, acting as a profession and as an exclusive means of earning one's living has no justification. It can only be tolerated when practised together with "other honest and lawful arts" (p. 7). Music was one such "honest and lawful" art that, for a time at least, allowed plays to be performed.

Returning to the argument posed earlier by Peter Kivy and, I would speculate, contemporary Restoration theatre critics such as Roger North and John Downes, the fact that music was not banned but drama was is a telling sign that the kinds of conflicts dealt with were not of the same character. By using "pure music" without text, their "struggles" are not perceived to be as powerful or complex as dramatic conflict. Kivy goes further to criticize the form of the operatic libretto as something that always loses the "real psychological depth and complexity" of the original. In Restoration theatre, Shakespeare's own words, considered inappropriate for a variety of reasons, were rarely used. This was the case in Henry Purcell's adaptation of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for the semi-opera *The Fairy Queen* and countless other pieces he was involved in. Kivy would argue that, ultimately, opera



does not need to faithfully render the text because the vast majority of listeners simply won't be able to discern most of the words.

Another important point that Peter Kivy makes to further elevate dramatic art over music in terms of the kinds of tension and resolution unique to each is as follows:

...(I)t should be remarked that the resolution of tension or conflict in music is more complete, and in that sense more satisfying, than it can ever be in spoken drama. That is because music, unlike natural languages, is "a syntax without semantics." In the spoken drama, conflict involves people and ideas; it is frequently moral conflict. In what we take to be its deepest, most profound form, tragedy, the conflicts are often the most difficult ones of all: indeed, those for which no solution seems possible, or for which every proffered solution is unsatisfying in some elemental way (p. 279).

Leonard Bernstein might take exception to Kivy's notion "that the resolution of tension or conflict in music is more complete" by offering, as an example, the "pure", instrumental music of Charles Ives' *The Unanswered Question*. Indeed, Bernstein used this piece as a touchstone for his entire series of lectures at Harvard University in 1973:

...(I)t is an almost graphic representation of the conflict. Of course the question Ives proposes in his title is not a strictly musical one, by his own say-so, but rather a metaphysical one...The repeated question remains more or less the same, but the answers grow more ambiguous and more hectic, until the answer emerges as utter gibberish (pp. 268-269).

Kivy might argue that Bernstein is using non-musical terminology to assess something that falls squarely, at least for Kivy, into the musical realm. This is Kivy's chief complaint about opera's treatment of a dramatic text in that it uses a language, a foreign language if you will, to render it useless or unintelligible. However, I argue that Bernstein is entirely correct in this regard. What Kivy assumes throughout is our

implicit agreement that the element key to music is that of conflict, therefore we can discuss music, drama, or music theatre in the same breath. This was discussed earlier in the paper using the writings of drama critics Downes and Mudford. However, Kivy succeeds in cornering himself into his own conflicting theory by assuming we all firmly believe that music's primary engine or object is conflict. Not only that, but by adhering ultimately to the same belief in language that Kivy claims the speech theorists to have tainted, he comes dangerously close to becoming one himself. All the post-facto theorizing that the Camerata claim responsibility for one of "the few musical innovations in which theory antedates practice" (Bukofzer, 1947, p. 112) might find the following words by Arnold Schönberg somewhat ironic, considering his propagation of mathematically derived music composition using the "emancipated" twelve-tone technique. In his *Structural Functions of Harmony* of 1946, Schönberg predicts:

One day there will be a theory which abstracts rules from these compositions. Certainly, the structural evaluation of these sounds will again be based upon their functional potentialities. But it is improbable that the quality of sharpness or mildness of the dissonances – which, in fact, is nothing more than a gradation according to lesser or greater beauty – is the appropriate foundation for a theory which explores, explains and teaches... *Theory must never precede creation*: 'And the Lord saw that all was well done' (p. 217).

Theodore Adorno, in *The Aging of the New Music*, defends Schönberg's position, stating, "Vain is the hope that through mathematical manipulations some pure musical thing-in-itself might come into being" (p. 194).

The practice of theory preceding creation has certainly not been confined to either the Second Viennese School or to the Camerata. Similarly, each school might rationalize their aesthetic by claiming, as does Gary Schmidgall in *Literature as*

*Opera*, that both of their forms of music expression “could capture inner turmoil rather than rhetorically articulated feelings” (p. 301). Adorno, in *The Philosophy of Modern Music*, declares, “the actual revolutionary moment for him (Schönberg) is the change in function of musical expression. Passions are no longer simulated, but rather genuine emotions of the unconscious – of shock, of trauma – are registered without disguises through the medium of music” (p. 39). Paul Kornfeld, in his writings *The Sentient and Psychological Man*, which were critical of Schönberg’s expressionism and German naturalist theater, would disagree with Kivy’s prior assertion that operatic expression is less powerful than the spoken word:

The melody of a larger-than-life gesture says more than the most extreme perfection of that which one calls naturalism ever could. One thinks of the opera in which the singer, dying, is still able to burst forth one last high C and who expresses more about death with the sweetness of his melody than if he were to twist and writhe. For that death is a great shame is more important than it is hideous (p. 299).

Leonard Bernstein, in the chapter “*What Makes Opera Grand?*” from *The Joy of Music*, makes a similar case for the extraordinary ability that operatic expression has compared to drama on its own. The overall book is based upon a musically educative program named *Omnibus* which ran on television in the late 1950’s and early 1960’s, similar in structure to his *Young People’s Concerts*. The following views of Bernstein are especially important in light of his later, more prescriptive and limiting views around musical expression when he began applying linguistics to his aesthetic of music:

One of the chief reasons for the tremendously direct power of opera is that it is *sung*. Now, that fact may seem childishly obvious, but it acquires great significance when you consider that of all the different instruments in this vast, heterogeneous collection called an orchestra, there is none that can compete in any way with the sublime expressivity of the human voice. It is the

greatest instrument there is; and when such a voice, or several, or many together, carry the weight of a drama, of a story line, of an emotional situation, then there is nothing in all theater to compare with it for sheer immediacy of impact (p. 271).

In his own exuberant variant of the arousal theory, Bernstein continues:

Now, all these primary emotions are not merely presented to us; they are *hurled* at us. You see, music is something terribly special. It doesn't have to pass through the censor of the brain before it can reach the heart; it goes directly to the heart. You don't have to screen it, as you do words in a play. An F-sharp doesn't have to be considered in the mind; it is a direct hit, and, therefore, all the more powerful. Think of Shakespeare's *King Lear* in an opera. He'd be raging as no Lear ever could rage in the spoken play: in a great bass voice, with a frantic, high G-flat, with a howling chorus offstage, and ninety players helping him in the pit. Of course, in a play, where there are only words to listen to, there is more chance for subtlety, and maybe profundity of ideas (p. 277).

Later, using the example of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, Bernstein alludes to the reasons composers have when choosing librettos and the choices they make for what is and is not deemed allowable to be set to music. In the case of Iago's Soliloquy, according to Bernstein, Shakespeare's original written form is unsuitable for operatic treatment:

Can you imagine all those words set to music? Never! They are too rational, too self-contradictory, too dependent on the mind for their appeal. In the book of an opera, or the libretto, there is no time for all this rationalization. In opera music expands the text to such a degree, emotionally, in time, and in many other ways, that the words must be almost rudimentary in their function. The characters boldly carved, uncomplicated, and easy to recognize. The emotional patterns must be equally fundamental (p. 278).

Bernstein also attempts to explain the musical expression reached in Giacomo Puccini's *La Boheme* through a kind of analysis using "absolute music":

Right away we hear Puccini setting this atmosphere for us in the music: cold, hollow fifths...Now there are various ways that cold can be shown on the stage...the lighting can be gray and unfriendly, and citizens can go about all muffled to the ears, beating themselves to keep warm. But none of these comes anywhere near the coldness we feel from those cold, empty fifths that

Puccini rains like snowflakes over the stage. Now we've seen the first way music can expand drama into opera: by expanding the very scenery itself (pp. 280-282).

Bernstein goes on to demonstrate for us how the musical notes alone change the emotional effect in *La Boheme*:

From the first notes she (Mimi) sings, to the guard at the city gates, the music is telling us how sick she is. Now notice I didn't say the *words* are telling this. All they're saying is: "Sa dirni, scusi" "Excuse me, can you tell me", and so forth. Nothing but a plot line. But the music tells us much more... You hear all those rests between the phrases? That panting struggle for breath? And, of course, you must have noticed that the whole musical line is constantly falling, giving us an exact sense of her failing strength... the line drops, as her strength wanes. Such perfect sick music! And what makes it even sicker is that the line drops by half tones, by the smallest possible intervals, so that it's almost like one long sigh... And on top of that, the harmony in the orchestra is a series of descending ninth chords, very sick-sounding indeed. (pp. 284-285)

It appears obvious to me that Bernstein is extremely fond of this opera, to the extent that he naturally assumes his audience hears, sees, feels and believes the same thing as he does. His certainty in the universal notion that intervals a fifth apart signify *cold* is certainly not supported by his later example in *The Unanswered Question* (pp. 17-21). By using the vibrating low C on the piano, the very next resulting overtone in the series is the same fifth, a G, that, in *La Boheme*, was representative of *cold*. Surely, this most frequent of naturally occurring overtones could not always imply an often uncomfortable melancholic emotional response that humans universally associate with *cold*? This same interval, according to the 18<sup>th</sup> century Jesuit Pèrre L. B. Castel's color-tone parallel theory *Optique des couleurs*, produces a universal recognition of the colours blue and red when hearing it. Castel believed this: "Deep blue, as I have always said, always carries within itself the birth

of red. Is it not the C-string that makes the dominant G sound? Red is certainly the dominant color of nature” (p.13).

Bernstein also assumes that the chromatic falling notes, which Mimi sings, trigger a universally shared response that she is *sick*. Using a similar sound scenario in the music of composer Claudio Monteverdi, a radically different interpretation may have resulted. According to Frederick Bishop’s liner notes for *Selva morale e spirituale*, the “chromatic treatment of the Misericordia” for the choir in *Laudate Dominum omnes gentes* represents “both the plea for mercy and a situation from which the plea resulted” (p.2). However, the descending chromatic vocal lines in the *Et in terra pax* “signifies the earth” (p.2). These would all be unreasonable assumptions to demand of an audience which is often expected to sit, passively listening and patiently waiting to be instructed what to think and feel by those “in the know”.

Nevertheless, I forgive Bernstein for this very human characteristic of “thought-projection” and find solace in the knowledge that, no matter how rational one can get in theorizing, there are never absolute truths. To begin with, by using an old Irish saying in his book *The Limits of Reason*, John Eisenberg warns that: “For every solution, we have a problem” (p. 78.) He further advises us that: “Thinking cannot be nailed down. It cannot be objectified” (p. 80).

Returning to “*What Makes Opera Grand?*”, Bernstein attempts metaphysical reasoning for why opera elevates text into a higher realm than a play ever could. Regarding a concept he calls “simultaneous singing”, Bernstein claims that “music

accomplishes the miracle, because notes are born to sound together, as words are not” (p. 292). He expounds upon this idea:

This is really the crowning delight of opera: that in the very same moment we can experience conflicting passions, contrasting moods and separate events. And because only the gods have ever been able to perceive more than one thing at a time, we are, for this short period, raised to the level of the gods. But music can go even a step further: it can render words almost unimportant. This is the highest estate opera can reach, where the music is so communicative that the merest general knowledge of the dramatic action is enough to give you the key to a rich enjoyment of the work (p. 302).

A paradoxical situation seems to recur for Bernstein, in that the more he attempts to explain, the less believable he becomes. If opera is “so communicative that the *merest* general knowledge of the dramatic action is enough”, then why does he persist in prescribing our responses? Additionally, the challenge of addressing expression in “absolute music” is yet another teaching challenge for Bernstein. The Harvard lectures provide a forum for him to openly justify his educated, personal tastes on the subject and offer his explanations, while alternating between embracing and repelling various examples of music along the way. In the latter section of Part I, I wish to deal briefly with the new aesthetic that Arnold Schönberg and other composers of the twentieth-century brought, as well as the demands this made of its audiences. The criticisms of Ruth Subotnik regarding the contradictions inherent in this new aesthetic and its reliance upon language, itself an enormously limiting factor, will be a major focus throughout the last part of this section of the paper.

The paradox of our human need to use language to explain, that which may not be possible at all to explain, reaches a new zenith in the area of contemporary art music. Ruth Subotnik, in her paper *The Challenge of Contemporary Music*, suggests:

The contemporary aesthetic has refined the relativistic aspects of historicism

to such an extent that it has negated the hopes of contemporary music as a whole for historical vindication as a standard repertory and locked it into self-contradiction. Unable to achieve social secure status on strictly structural grounds, contemporary music has left itself only one legitimate way to draw a relatively broad public. Its one rather wan hope is to coerce the public through a sense of moral obligation based on faith in the composer's integrity and in the authority of experts into supporting contemporary music for the fact, rather than the substance, of its individualistic virtue (p. 372).

Viewed from a point of origin in the social factors surrounding the artist, John Dewey, in *Art as Experience*, offers this perspective on the shift in contemporary aesthetics:

A peculiar esthetic "individualism" results. Artists find it incumbent upon them to betake themselves to their work as an isolated means of "self-expression." In order not to cater to the trend of economic forces, they often feel obliged to exaggerate their separateness to the point of eccentricity. Consequently artistic products take on to a still greater degree the air of something independent and esoteric (pp.9-10).

Subotnik continues with her diagnosis of the crisis by criticizing the modern aesthetic towards contemporary works which must have the ability to judge themselves by their uniqueness only and not based upon reference to previous structure. She refers to Arnold Schönberg to demonstrate how pervasive this aesthetic was. He and many of his followers adhered to the following credo, taken from his *New Music, Outmoded Music*, which Subotnik quotes, "In higher art, only that which is being presented which has never before been presented...*Art means New Art*" (p.393).

Gilles Deleuze provides a commentary on this notion that artistic creation comes about through the negation of prior forms. In *On Nietzsche and the Image of Thought*, Deleuze writes:

As you are no doubt aware, the problem of formal renewal can be posed only when the content is new. Sometimes, even, the formal renewal comes after. It



is what one has to say, what one thinks one has to say, that imposes new forms. Now philosophy, it's true, is nothing spectacular. Philosophy has not at all undergone similar revolutions or experiments as those produced in science, sculpture, music, or literature. Plato, Kant, and the rest – they remain fundamental, and that's fine. I mean, non-Euclidian geometries don't keep Euclid from being fundamental to geometry. Schoenberg doesn't nullify Mozart. Similarly, the search for modes of expression (both a new image of thought and new techniques) must be essential for philosophy (pp. 140-141).

Another self-contradiction addressed by Subotnik is the “characteristic incorporation of discursive elements into the generating principle of contemporary compositions” (p. 373). Not only do the aesthetics of the atonal and serialist composers take criticism from Subotnik, but so do also those who make music that might be considered to possess “regressive” qualities, according to members of the “good art is unique art” school of thought:

(E)ven music which seems to denigrate structure in favor of new sensuous or experiential definitions of music, generally manages to retain the primacy of structure which vouches for its validity, by expanding the notion of autonomy to include the idea of that experience. No western musical structure has ever lent itself so readily to verbal “explanation” as the contemporary one, or felt so keenly the need to be able to do so (p. 373).

In his book, *Music and the ineffable*, Vladimir Jankélévitch reminds us of the unfortunate reliance upon language and dialogue for descriptions and prescriptions in areas such as music when, for genuine understanding to occur, words simply might not be called for. Referring to Nietzsche's preface to *The Wanderer and His Shadow*, Jankélévitch states:

Nietzsche no doubt wanted to say the following: music is not proper to dialogue, whose nature rests in exchange, the analysis of ideas, amicable collaboration that takes place mutually and equitably. Music does not allow the discursive, reciprocal communication of meaning but rather an immediate and ineffable communication; and this can only take place in the penumbra of melancholia, unilaterally, from hypnotist to the hypnotized (p. 9).

Unlike Nietzsche, most contemporary composers cannot fathom that the limits

of language might not extend themselves to the musical realm. One such musician who had this affliction is Gunther Schuller. Schuller has been an outspoken voice on behalf of contemporary music and in jazz studies. He was a guest lecturer when I was an undergraduate and expressions of his distinct tastes on what was “good” and what was “not good” made quite an impression on me at the time, despite me considering Schuller not a little intolerant of other opinions voiced in the lecture hall. In a lecture entitled *Toward a New Classicism?* which he delivered at Goucher College in Baltimore, Schuller declares:

(A)udiences stand before our new musics baffled, irritated and uncomprehending, while the classics and many forms of contemporary popular music capture and hold the hearts and ears of those with whom we composers would dearly love to communicate. At one time we relied on the incoming generation as our Great Hope. “They will listen to our music, and understand us without the language barriers their elders had,” we told ourselves. Alas, vain hope! For young people today are even more conservative in their musical tastes than their elders (p. 175).

Instead of trying to find ways to directly communicate with this audience through the medium of music, Schuller is unable to comprehend that it is he and his league of contemporary composers who have carried the so-called language barrier with them to the subsequent generation. During his lecture in my undergraduate music school, Schuller heaped blame upon the university music schools and conservatories for their cloistered insular existence and dogmatic training that is a standard feature of the listening laboratory. In *Toward a New Classicism?*, he announces, “The art of music cannot exist in a hothouse atmosphere, in a laboratory or a research station” (p. 175).

Subotnik is equally critical of the “structured listening” that dominates North American music departments. She spends a good deal of time, in a very sympathetic

manner, discussing the audience which contemporary music has tended to neglect and, in some cases, even despise. Both composers Arnold Schönberg and Alban Berg were distrustful of favourable reactions from their audiences when performing new works. Seen as a sign of failure to either enrage or engage them with *wholly original* compositions, audiences were often treated with derision by many composers, despite their ultimate reliance upon their support. Igor Stravinsky, in *Conversations with Stravinsky*, claims that, “What disturbs me about this great masterpiece (the opera *Wozzeck*) and one that I love is the level of its appeal to ignorant audiences” (pp. 248-249).

The repercussions of this has, in Subotnik’s view, caused the “structural listening method” to justify “higher education in music since innate competence in structural listening is almost universally assumed in the west to be a rare gift” (p. 375). This casts a dark shadow upon music education at any level in our system. Just what, then, do we teach our students to listen to, or, as Sparshott might say, to listen for?

A vivid example of this is Leonard Bernstein’s filmed version of *The Unanswered Question*. There are two distinct versions of this lecture series. The first is the film itself, which combines talk, overhead reproductions, music and the mannerisms of Bernstein that mere words cannot convey. Less satisfying is the written version of the lectures which, in its edited and highly amended form, removes much of Bernstein’s non-scripted, personal responses to the music he discusses. No matter how often he places words in italics or quotation marks to approximate his lectured *expression*, words often do him an injustice on the page.

During an hour and a half of lecturing the audience on how to “correctly” listen to Beethoven’s Sixth Symphony, Bernstein cites Aristotle who places metaphor “midway between the unintelligible and the commonplace” and reminds us “it is metaphor which most produces knowledge” (p. 139). Bernstein then contends that “music, because of its specific and far-reaching metaphorical powers - can name the unnamable, and communicate the unknowable” (p. 140). Ruth Subotnik might commend Bernstein for “mingling musical with philosophical analysis” (p. 375) in this guided listening lecture. She would not, however, approve of its flaunting of an “objectivity which makes it an exact counterpart to scientific method and as such it is regularly applied by experts to music of all periods in Western history” (p. 376). This example of traditional music education’s acceptance of scientific positivism is critical to arguments in this thesis that phenomenological responses to music experience, often belittled and ignored as uneducated, subjective inarticulateness, might be a more appropriate and meaningful approach than any Schenkerian or “Bernsteinian” analysis.

Immediately following the lecture, Bernstein shows a film of the orchestra performing the music in question. This musical example lasts, nearly to the minute, half the time he took to “explain” it. How can one have a personal listening experience following his numerous guided questions and conflictive, prescriptive instructions?:

...is it possible to hear Beethoven’s *Pastorale* Symphony as pure music, divorced from all its extrinsic metaphors? Well, it should be possible, since Beethoven himself said that his subtitles and cuckoo calls and thunderclaps were to be taken only as *suggestion* – “not tone painting” (to use his own words) “but as *Empfindungen*, feelings” – and therefore not too literally. But still those extramusical references *are* there; Beethoven put them there with

his own hand, and it's not easy to ignore them.

What they do, actually, is to form a kind of visual curtain of nonmusical ideas, a semi-transparent curtain, so to speak, that interposes itself between the listener and the music per se. What I propose to do is change the lighting on that curtain, using a light strong enough to render it wholly transparent, to turn it into "scrim", as they say in the theater, through which we can look directly into the music, in all its intrinsic meanings, clearly, freed from the bondage of so-called "music appreciation" or of flowery program notes or of those Disney nymphs and centaurs which have gotten painted onto our scrim. *Away with all of that*. I am presenting you with a challenge: to rid your mind of all nonmusical notions, all birds and rustic pleasures, and to concentrate only on the music in all its *own* metaphorical pleasures. I want you to hear it as if for the first time (p. 157).

Immediately following a performance of the *Pastorale* Symphony, in the filmed version of the lecture (his opening words in chapter fourteen), Bernstein ironically says, "It's very hard to say anything after that." Given that a main premise for the lecture series was Bernstein's attempt to fit Chomsky's *Language and Mind* into a musical context while attempting to explain, through linguistics, the ambiguity of music, Bernstein often encounters paradoxical chasms. Yet, he soldiers on by continually fitting the so-called logic of language into musical "explanations". Felix Mendelssohn, in his journal of music criticism *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, suggests an alternative, "We, ourselves, may regard our silence as the ultimate homage..., due partly to the hesitancy one feels when confronted with a phenomenon one would prefer to approach through the senses" (Treitler, p.26). Leo Treitler, in his article *Language and the Interpretation of Music*, makes the following suggestion:

The ambivalence is a romantic characteristic. People liked talking about the difficulty or impossibility of talking about music, as much as they liked talking about music. We have inherited that quirk (p. 26).

Theodore Gracyk, from his treatise on the aesthetics of popular music *Rhythm and Noise*, quotes the musician Elvis Costello who remarks, "Writing about music is

like dancing about architecture.” Likewise, in his book *A Day in the Life*, Mark Hertsgaard provides John Lennon’s less openly quotable comment that, "Writing about music is like talking about fucking. Who wants to talk about it?" These observations, all crudity aside, are fitting. Language and musical description may be completely incompatible. So, to amend Kivy’s credo from the beginning of this paper, “What music can’t do, opera can’t do”, I suggest, “What words can’t do, music can do.”

## **Part II: Say No More**

**Jazz is the orchestra of brutes  
with nonopposable thumbs  
and still prehensile toes,  
in the forest of voodoo.**  
*Anonymous music critic (1920)*

**I firmly believe that music will someday become a ‘universal language’.  
But it will not become so as long as our musical vision is limited to the  
output of  
four European countries between 1700 and 1900. The first step in the  
right direction  
is to view the music of all peoples and periods without prejudice of any  
kind.**  
*Percy Grainger (1933)*

**The erotic music of the modern dance-band may  
or may not consist of noises like those made  
by persons in a state of sexual excitement,  
but it does most powerfully evoke feelings  
like those proper to such a state.**  
*Robin G. Collingwood (1958)*

**We also hear with our feet  
I’d quoted Busoni: Standing between  
musician and music  
is notation.**  
*John Cage (1966)*

Is an obstacle, as John Cage suggests, the written notes or “fixed “ product in music? There are a number of musicians and composers like John Cage who give a compelling argument that this often is the case. Similarly, there are derisive voices that accuse those, who improvise jazz music and do not strictly use Western notation as their musical product, of being “illegitimate” musicians. In this section of the thesis, I will argue that the musical improvisers in jazz are legitimately creators or composers and that their creations stem from a tradition of experience and

knowledge. Reference will be made to Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's model of the domain of creativity, Robert Weisberg's continuity and discontinuity theory and Sharon Bailin's writings on "the something more" in works of art. The rich inheritance of jazz as an improvised art has seen the integration of influences such as African polyrhythms, Christian hymns, military marches and classical music's forms and structures. Improvised jazz music is, at its best, reflective of its diverse heritage and is not entirely comprised of an "anything goes" aesthetic. Western classical, composed or "art" music has, this past century, frequently reflected the influence of jazz improvisation in the work of many composers. This phenomenon echoes the state of Western classical music in the Baroque and Classical periods when performers were given artistic permission to improvise at certain acceptable times in thoroughly composed pieces, a practice that was, arguably, to be discontinued by Ludwig van Beethoven. Western art music is slowly accepting jazz improvisation as a "true" artistic product, often through the assistance of notating improvised solos which "legitimizes" the creative process by its transformation into a "fixed" product.

Improvisation is a practice not new to Western music and art. In his book on Homer and oral narrative, *The Singer of Tales*, Albert Lord contends that the sung Homeric verses were improvised and required much training on the part of the aspiring singer:

...his (the singer of tales) training is preeminently one of learning to produce lines. Part of the process is accomplished by remembering and using phrases heard from other singers. This constitutes one element in the continuity of oral epic style. The phrases help to establish in the singer's experience a series of patterns...At the same time, by necessity, because he does not remember all the phrases which he needs, he is forced at the moment of his private performances to form phrases on the basis of the patterns (p. 42).



This description is very similar to the way Paul Berliner portrays an “apprentice” jazz improviser learning his or her skills in the book *Thinking in Jazz*:

Many youngsters redefine their early artistic goals to include an amalgam of the features of their favorite improvisers within their instrument’s lineage...This approach enables students to move in the direction of forging personal styles, while at the same time operating confidently within the bounds of the jazz tradition (p.138).

The jazz tradition, like the oral epic tradition, requires an artist to use memory, not notation or the written word, in gaining the requisite vocabulary associated with what Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi might call “the domain”. Applying Csikszentmihalyi’s model further to the domain of improvised jazz, judgment of the creativity of the improvising artist or person should best be done by individuals in “the field”. Imagine the difficulty anyone would have who, apparently, “knows the domain” and is in “the field” of jazz. Now imagine them having the objective ability of separating the multitude of their own tastes from what “departs” from “the standard.” This is artistic theorizing at its most naïve, similar to the expectations Leonard Bernstein places upon audiences to listen to “purely musical metaphors” and nothing else during Beethoven’s Sixth Symphony, previously discussed in Part I of this paper. In the area of jazz music, a host of other factors besides “departure” might come into play when granting a musician the title “creative”. The musicians Robert Schumann, Leo Treitler and Yaroslav Senyshyn might just as easily refrain from verbal explanation, in the face of something we must confront as sentient beings.

John Coltrane might have departed from many standard rules of extemporization at the time, but this did not stop other players from disliking his tone. This has always been my personal challenge with listening to him at times. Even

Coltrane's wife Alice, herself an excellent musician, expressed liking her husband's later change in tone production much better than he was capable of doing earlier, despite dramatically departing from the more common improvising style in those formative years. In the liner notes from John Coltrane's *Ballads*, trumpeter Donald Byrd made the statement that, "After all these years of playing, I've come to the conclusion that one of the most difficult things to do is play a melody straight and play it well with good tone and feeling." In the following proposal that "departures" are "creative" while "deviant" performance should be ignored or censored, Csikszentmihalyi comes dangerously close to joining the company of Theodore Adorno in judging good art by criteria of its "continuous development" by those in "the field". According to Csikszentmihalyi, the field is comprised of:

...individuals who know the domain's grammar of rules and are more or less loosely organized to act as gatekeepers to it. The field decides whether an individual's performance meets the criteria of the domain. It also decides whether an individual performance that departs from the standard rules of the domain is "creative" and thus should be added to the domain, or whether it is simply "deviant" and thus should be ignored or censored (p. 201).

In another example of a censorious aesthetic, Jerrold Levinson argues that jazz performances based upon improvisation are not suitable for inclusion in his definition which states that music performances be "legitimately evaluated" based upon that work being a "sound event, intentionally produced in accord with the determination of the work by the composer" (pp. 366-377). In *Music, Art and Metaphysics*, Levinson further elaborates his position on jazz founded upon his definition of what is "legitimate music":

I shall be concerned primarily with the evaluation of performances in that sphere for which there is a performance/work distinction - by and large, that of notated Classical music. One has room, in this sphere, for a clear distinction

between goodness of work and goodness of performances thereof. With jazz compositions, by contrast, especially those improvised..., the distinction all but evaporates (p. 377).

In his book *The Imperfect Art: Reflections on Jazz and Modern Culture*, Ted Gioia asserts a position that urges philosophers of music not to discount jazz improvisation simply because it might appear to be “unintentionally produced”, due to lacking the “criteria” of having the presence of Western notation or a musical “score”, *prior* to performance:

The salience of jazz’s virtues when viewed as an activity are due, at least partly, to its existence as a temporal art form. It cannot be grasped entirely in an instant as is, arguably, the case with many visual arts. In temporal arts such as music, cinema, and dance, the role of activity is more apparent than in the plastic arts, and any attempt to reduce the work to a physical object is more easily resisted (p. 98).

Gioia continues by challenging Nelson Goodman’s position that the musical score, and not the performance, defines the work. Similarly, Theodor Adorno is criticized for his inclusion of jazz in the realm of commercialized popular music. Adorno’s aesthetic, acquired in part by his Viennese School preoccupations, namely that so-called continuous development is a precursor for judging “good art”. While certain pieces bearing the jazz moniker may have no redeeming creative qualities as judged by those in “the field”, as Csikszentmihalyi refers to it, the jazz world at the time of Adorno’s criticism of popular music, 1941, was filled with latecomers looking to make money now that swing had become an accepted mainstream style, especially when it was used primarily for dancing. At that time, 78-rpm recordings typically began bearing a stamp designating the type of dance one could engage in with the recorded music, such as the ever-popular “Fox Trot”. Duke Ellington, who had been a forerunner in the Swing movement in the early 1930’s, made the statement that

“Swing died in 1938”. This might indicate that Adorno’s essay was really focused upon the then existing movement that offered no fresh ideas to the Swing or jazz tradition. Historically, art music has also brimmed with latecomers and copyists. Look only to the chequered history of an Antonio Salieri as he cast a shadow upon Mozart. Csikszentmihalyi’s model might suggest that individuals in the field, aware of and intimately familiar with the domain’s grammar of rules, such as was Duke Ellington, might be in a far better position to assess the validity or legitimacy of jazz as a creative art form.

In his book *Philosophical Perspectives on Music*, Wayne Bowman is pointedly critical of Adorno who wrote that:

Because Adorno completely failed to comprehend the distinctive nature and traditions of jazz, he was unable to distinguish it from any other culture industry product...Adorno injudiciously applies the values of composed, notated musics to musical traditions that are fundamentally aural and improvisational in nature. This disposes him to seek syntactical and formal complexity in musics whose priorities are fundamentally processual in nature and, finding none, to declare such musics valueless (p. 331).

Lee Brown’s essay *Adorno’s Case Against Popular Music*, he criticizes Adorno for stating the reason why listeners find the “bent” or “slurred” notes in jazz so fascinating is because:

...our ear is moved to correct them back to the “right” notes. It is as if he hears jazz as if it *were* European music, but badly played, full of mistakes...Since Adorno cannot see the music in its own terms, he does not recognize that in jazz distinctive ways of handling musical materials, for example, rhythm, timbre, and spontaneity, are higher in the musical hierarchy than the musical characteristics of classical music.

Adorno’s aesthetic, like that of Goodman, bears very much upon the Western European tradition of written work or the final product. In her book *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works*, Lydia Goehr argues that this view, based upon the

“conceptual and institutionalized structure of classical music practice” (p. 99) might be in need of serious re-evaluation:

What we understand today to be perfect compliance (*to the work or product*) has not always been an ideal and might not be in the future. Actually it is quite peculiar and unique. It has characterized classical music practice for the last 200 years. It is also not universal in the world of music. In fact, it is significantly this ideal that serves to distinguish the practice of producing performances of classical musical works from the performance practices associated with other kinds of music. Whereas in classical music performances we strive towards maximal compliance with a fully specifying score, in traditional jazz improvisations, where very different notions of compliance operate, musicians seek the limits of minimal compliance to tunes or themes. In most jazz, extemporization is the norm (p.99).

Goehr’s identification that music has not always been “perfect compliance” with works of a classical origin is well documented in the works of Johan Sebastian Bach, Georg Friedrich Händel, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Ludwig van Beethoven. All these composers were known by their contemporaries “in the field” as possessing formidable technical skills and the ability to improvise. *The Harvard Dictionary of Music* defines improvisation as “the art of performing music spontaneously, without the aid of manuscript, sketches, or memory” (p. 404). Yet another definition of “improvise” is found in the *American Heritage Dictionary* meaning both “to invent, compose, or recite without preparation” and “to make or provide from available materials”.

These are misleading definitions because they do not account for the technical abilities, the prior knowledge and the experience in the field which do indeed “prepare” one to be a creative improviser. It is difficult to imagine anyone “performing spontaneously...without the aid of memory” or “without preparation” in any endeavour, let alone a musical one. This stands in marked contrast from

Csikszentmihalyi's expectation that one "know the domain's grammar of rules". In the case of the invisible arts, particularly in improvised musics, the "available materials" are largely cerebral and give great difficulty in applying this or any definition to them. How does one know all the notes, their combinations and their contexts, in someone like the alto saxophonist Charlie Parker? How could one foresee creative manifestations from a mind that equally appreciated Igor Stravinsky and Hank Williams? It is likely the same surprise that struck audience members fortunate enough to hear the improvisations of Bach, Händel, Mozart and Beethoven.

To then accept improvised music because "legitimate" composers were also skilled improvisers seems shallow and smacks of cultural condescension. Music philosopher Peter Kivy, in his book *Authenticities: Philosophical Reflections on Musical Performance*, makes an interesting point about the relation between composition and performance in Western classical music, stating:

...that in the Western musical tradition the composer, until very recently, has usually been a distinguished, not infrequently a fabled and lionized, virtuoso as well, usually on keyboard instruments. And another well-known fact that must prevent us from taking the maker-marketer model *too* literally is the role *improvisation* has played, until very recently, in the composer-performer's bag of tricks. For when a Frescobaldi or Bach, Mozart or Beethoven, Chopin or Liszt was not merely as a performer of his own music or of that of others but especially as a composer "on the spot" (p. 164).

If one looks back to the Baroque period and its musical traditions, composers like Johann Sebastian Bach and Georg Friedrich Händel had cadenzas or, according to the *Harvard Dictionary of Music*, "a passage or section of varying length in a style of brilliant improvisation, usually inserted near the end of a composition, where it serves as a retarding (*slowing*) element, giving the performer a chance to exhibit his technical mastery" (p.120). Usually, the performers drew their improvisations from

thematic material in the piece being performed. Later, according to the *Harvard Dictionary of Music*, Beethoven felt compelled to “guard against the poor taste and stylistic incongruities of the pianist-composers” (p. 121) and began writing in the cadenzas of his pieces, beginning with his Fifth Piano Concerto *The Emperor*. This arguably ended an expected role of the performer as an improviser in the Western classical tradition and bore partial responsibility for creating the positivist-formalist model for what is considered widely to be the only “legitimate” music: notated scores and compositions. However, as Senyshyn proposes later in the paper, this paradigm could not and cannot stop musicians from interpreting this music, despite its written edict.

Feruccio Busoni, the musician quoted by John Cage at the very beginning of this paper, who said, “Standing between musician and music is notation”, was very well known for his written cadenzas for many of Mozart’s piano concertos. It might seem ironic to believe this statement came from a person who attempted to notate that which was not intended originally by the composer to be notated. However, besides the possibility that Cage took the statement out of context, perhaps Busoni, like Beethoven, wished to guard against the “poor taste and stylistic incongruities of the pianist-composers”. Conceivably too, Busoni might have firmly believed his interpretation of Mozart did not stand between musician and music, that somehow his notation liberated the concertos from poor performances of the cadenzas.

This brings up an area of concern for modern classical music composition and performance. In the late 1930’s John Cage, partially due to his investigations into world musics and religions as well as having an interest in the American

improvisational jazz method, fully renounced the prevailing practice of written music. During this period, the styles in classical music fashion were dodecaphony or twelve-tone serial music, a music more or less generated using formulas and highly detailed performance descriptions, essentially rendering the music free of major interpretational influences by the performers.

It is here that one might apply Robert Weisberg's theory of continuity and discontinuity to Western classical music and to jazz during this period. In his book *Creativity: Beyond the Myth of Genius*, Weisberg characterized significant changes termed "*discontinuous*" in the style of Mozart with his varying exposures to and influences by people he met and places that he visited. Similarly, John Cage drew from his non-Western cultural influences, in both music and religion, and posited a curious amalgam of a number of different artistic spheres. Cage engaged in a correspondence between 1949 and 1962 with composer, conductor and writer Pierre Boulez. In the published version of their letters, *The Boulez – Cage Correspondence*, one sees a fascinating dialogue of aesthetics unravel. Cage believes that chance operations and improvisation allowances for performers of new classical music is essential to move music past the "anchor" of the written score. Through the writings, one notices that their drastic differences in aesthetics begins to erode their relationship.

Later, Boulez even wrote publicly of Cage's unsatisfactory attempts to integrate chance operations into Western music. Writing in *Orientations*, Boulez makes a valid point about the problems associated with allowing classical performers to extemporize as part of another's composition:



What actually happens, for instance, when players are given vague diagrams? I have a lot of experience here, and I know that if you give them schemes or diagrams, or even a number of notes to arrange themselves, you can be quite sure that they will always produce cliches, contemporary cliches none the less. If the player were an inventor of forms or of primary musical material, he would be a composer. If he is not a composer, it is because he is by choice and by capacity a performer; so that if you do not provide him with sufficient information to perform a work, what can he do? He can only turn to information that he has been given on some earlier occasion, in *fact* to what he has already played (p. 461).

Even conductors of their own works are subject to the same indeterminacy when performing or recording. In the following example, it seems even Boulez did not hold fast to his own musical score. Writing in *The Real Frank Zappa Book*, Zappa notes:

I bought my first Boulez album when I was in the twelfth grade: A Columbia recording of “Le Marteau Sans Maître” (The Hammer Without a Master) conducted by Robert Craft... Within a year or so of that, I managed to get hold of a score. I listened to the record while following the score, and I noticed that the performance was not very accurate. I later acquired a recording... with Boulez conducting, and was surprised to find that he took the first movement much more slowly than the tempo marked in the score. I razzed him about it when we met (p. 195).

These double standards for conductor compared to the performer are common in the area of art music. As the “composer” of the work, rights of performers are secondary to any conductive variation that might arise. This brings to mind the Federico Fellini film *Prova d'orchestra (Orchestra Rehearsal: The Decline of the West in C# Major)*. The orchestra, among other interpretations the viewer might have, might be a metaphor for tyranny. In this film, each orchestra member asserts that their instrument is the most important. Following growing dissension within the orchestra, the conductor is eventually replaced by an enormous metronome. This, too, is not satisfactory to the orchestra members and the metronome is toppled. Finally, when

the ancient chapel in which the orchestra rehearses nearly collapses, the conductor is re-instated and order is again resumed.

To some, this might appear to be a rather obvious metaphor for the film. It rang particularly true for me at the time of first seeing it while I was an orchestra member in my undergraduate days. Having played with various conductors in the music school, I found that interpretational tyrannies did indeed exist, especially when the “guest conductor” or “guest composer” arrived. One often got the sense that they needed to quickly and radically set themselves apart, as a necessary rite, with any new group they led. Many musicians in jazz and other kinds of “popular music” regularly meet with the same derision, yet it is an accepted feature in most art music. The more eccentric the artist, the more most of us young orchestra musicians assumed they were possessive of genius. A state of awe was required.

Although I realized at the time that performing other interpretations of works was beneficial to challenge a player’s musical flexibility and sight-reading ability, it became increasingly evident that behind this lay a commercial enterprise to the benefit of the “visiting” conductor. Newly composed or arranged music by these conductors was routinely put on our stands, in the hope that they would be purchased and performed by the university. In an article by Simon Frith entitled *The popular music industry*, he might contend that this habit of selling compositions and arrangements is a simple vestige of the tradition he considers to be the first music industry: art music.

So-called classical music is precisely that music produced by the first music publishing industry...The modern music industry, in other words, took shape in ways that excluded the most popular forms of music making. It depended on ways of composing, arranging and learning music which were not the ways

in which music following oral traditions worked. Second, the score put into place a new music-making hierarchy (p. 30).

This hierarchy manifests itself in attitudes towards performances which allow so-called divergences from the score to be permissible when in the control of the conductor but not when in the hands of the performer. Referring to Boulez's previous concerns expressed about allowable performer extemporization within a piece of music, he appears to limit his criticism of *the performer* to the realm of contemporary art music. This attitude does cast some doubt upon his overall trust of the interpretive abilities of orchestra members even for non-contemporary pieces that may not call for any extemporization whatsoever. However, the words Boulez chooses suggest that *the performer* is essentially tantamount to a circus act, with only a limited amount of "tricks" and "crowd-pleasers" at her disposal when "called upon" to do so. This invitation, however, is hierarchical and is, ultimately, at the beck and call of the "authoritative" conductor.

Nevertheless, some philosophers and musicians have argued that this has been a primary factor in the demise of our current state of musical performance. In his article *Horowitz and the Enigma of Art*, Yaroslav Senyshyn presents the possibility that performers have become bored with the written text and may even become "extinct" as a result of its limiting prescriptions (p. 82). Citing R.G. Collingwood, Senyshyn points out that:

Performers have been told that they must not claim the status of collaborators, and must accept the sacred text just as they find it; authors have tried to guard against any danger of collaboration from performers by making their book or their text fool-proof. The result has been not to stop performers from collaborating (that is impossible), but to breed up a generation of performers who are not qualified to collaborate boldly and competently (p. 83).

Senyshyn further questions the “prevailing fashion” of “blind faith in objectivity and the sacredness of the score” in art music by asking:

Is the result of this incompetency destroying our musical culture already? Are live musical performers already going extinct? Are we convinced that we have indeed exhausted all the possibilities and variables of performance interpretations? (p. 83).

In a recorded talk by Vladimir Horowitz, he speaks about his frustrations as an artist. His art, touching upon several areas of concern that Senyshyn’s article addresses, was a remarkable example of a “coauthor” who could “collaborate boldly and competently.” Horowitz, when speaking in the following unknown recording, often has great melancholy in his voice:

In some way all of us sitting here...every one of us all has some kind of a little frustration. Everyone. In one way we are happy but in another way we are unhappy, the human being is born like that, I have my own... You think, “He has everything... Oh, he’s the greatest in the world. He’s making money” but I wanted to be a composer. And my first thing when I was 13, 14, 15... I had so much music which I composed myself...but when my parents lost all their money...lost everything during the Revolution, so I told myself “They gave it me, I have to give them back and I started to concertize.” So, I’m a frustrated composer. Transcriptions, for me, is like nothing. Today, by the way, I changed my *Carmen*. Already I put four or five new bars. ...That is why I am not publishing because I don’t want to be only a transcriber because in my heart, I am a composer.

If one was to apply the same values of strict adherence to a written score held in “art music” to jazz music and limit the involvement of performers, such as in some examples of *Third Stream* compositions from the late 1950’s, the overwhelming majority of those that perform jazz would strongly rebel against this as running counter to the *real* meaning of their art. This has a parallel to Fellini’s film *Orchestra Rehearsal* when musicians revolted against the dominance of the conductor after their attempts to assert self-expression within “the score” are ignored.

As in similar concerns about dabbling with text and music by musicians and dramatists alike, voiced in Part I of this thesis, Boulez and Csikszentmihalyi might be suggesting that musicians and composers remain confined to their own fields and domains, and not pursue a “cross-pollination” of the musical arts. Despite many attempts of Western composers like John Cage to merge notation with improvisation, as a token acknowledgement of the validity of jazz as an art form, the music essentially stagnates and strangles itself of the possibilities of life that could have been instilled when left in the hands of those that would have known better. Similarly, some shrewd observations by Christopher Small regarding the distancing of modern performers, from both the work and the audience, are made in his book *Music •*

*Education • Society:*

The experience of music in the western art tradition remains essentially unchanged. It remains as cut off, not only from that vaguely defined group known as ‘the people’ but even from its immediate audience, as any music since the Renaissance. It is still composed by highly trained and remote specialists, played by professional musicians in concert halls and other spaces set aside for the purpose, at times set apart from our daily lives. The professional players remain as uninvolved as ever in what they are playing, the audience still (despite certain tricks by the composer to simulate involvement) remains apart from the process of creation, and the musical work remains an object for pure abstract contemplation whether it is a Beethoven symphony or a piece for prepared piano by John Cage (pp.168 – 169).

Small also criticizes contemporary “art music” composers in writing for the same elitist audiences that have sat in concert halls since their inception as “sound museums”:

The audience remains essentially the same, drawn from the same social groups as those who greeted the doings of the *Dauidsbüandler*, or fought the battles over *Tannhäuser* or *Pelléas* (whether Debussy’s or Schoenberg’s - or indeed Maeterlinck’s). The race against built-in obsolescence is still on in both music and technology, and the quest for new sources of energy, both

physical and mental, becomes more urgent every year. This situation is likely to persist as long as the art object remains the principal object of interest, as long as ordinary people are cut off from the creative process and left with nothing but the finished object to admire (p.169).

This is of great relevance to what was being discussed in the Adorno essay on popular music. To use Csikszentmihalyi's model of the domain of creativity, the domain of modern Western art music is not compatible with the domain of the improvised jazz musician. For Cage to assume one could easily find its way into the other without some difficulties, as Boulez so clearly pointed out, is overly naïve and might even suggest a lesser degree of respect on Cage's part for the jazz tradition to transplant it into a sphere of musical performance where musicians lost the tradition of improvisation nearly two hundred years previous, as Lydia Goehr alluded to earlier. This does not, as Senyshyn has rightly noted, prevent performers from having their own interpretations of scored music. Small's urgent desire that music find "new sources of energy, both physical and mental" is supported by Senyshyn's observation that performers' personal expression and engagement with text serves to revitalize the art. "Many more pianists identified the impasse that the objective approach has brought about: namely, that we have a breed of performers who are not qualified to *collaborate boldly and competently*" (p. 83).

A domain that did cross over without serious *performer vs. the work* challenges was when ragtime music evolved into jazz. Ragtime was generally a notated form, the first "fixing" of the rag structure is generally credited to *The Maple Leaf Rag* by Scott Joplin, according to the writer, musician, composer and teacher Gunther Schuller. In his essay *Rags, the Classics and Jazz*, Schuller credits jazz being born through "cross-pollination" of the black blues and American march traditions.

Jazz was distinct from ragtime, which was more comprehensible to the Western musical tradition to understand because it was written down and was not prone to excessive improvisation. Many classically trained composers began playing around with the form of rags, such as Charles Ives, Claude Debussy, Erik Satie and Igor Stravinsky. Many consider their efforts to be based on jazz forms when, according to Schuller in his books *Early Jazz* and *The Swing Era*, they were, in parallel to earlier criticisms of Adorno, far behind the “field”. Leonard Bernstein, then only 21, wrote in his Harvard Bachelor’s thesis *The Absorption of Race Elements into American Music*:

Long before it was called “swing” and had permeated our colleges and high schools to an extent where it too has almost become stale, this Negro jazz was *the* American music for those not impressed by the imitative output of the so-called serious composers (p. 52).

Bernstein was a musician unlike many others who actually believed he could cross from one “field” to another, deeming himself familiar with the rules and grammar necessary in the “domain”. One musician who played alongside Bernstein on many occasions was Louis Armstrong, considered by many to be the most significant figure to improvise jazz in the early stages of its development (Schuller, 1968, p. 89). The piece of considerable importance was *West End Blues*. Serious students of jazz trumpet at that time and to the present day consider learning this piece part of the standard repertoire.

From the late 1920’s until 1943, popular music of America, England and France was instrumental jazz. Improvisation was a usual component of the music on the radio as well as was the various forms and structures heard in the hands of different composers of the idiom. Duke Ellington had an enormous repertoire of

structures, forms and combinations at his creative disposal. He also wrote and arranged music that regularly suited and often challenged the styles of the many members of his orchestra gifted at improvising. It is important to note that not all his orchestra members felt comfortable doing this, just as Pierre Boulez questioned an expectation that modern classical players have the ability to extemporize. Many of Ellington's orchestra members played the notes on the page and were not called upon to improvise.

Another landmark improviser was the tenor saxophonist Coleman Hawkins. He improvised the jazz standard *Body and Soul* and, arguably, set a new standard of playing the instrument. The final eight bars of the solo are considered to have broken the bounds of possibilities for the tenor saxophone by extending the range of its previously known abilities. The technical proficiency of an artist, a requisite crucial to Sharon Bailin in her book *Achieving Extraordinary Means: An Essay on Creativity*, is necessary to break through the standard and create a new one. Coleman Hawkins 64-bar improvisation, based likely on his familiarity with all the standard renditions of *Body and Soul*, is a good example of Bailin's claim that a "particular interpretation" with "*the something more*" allows:

... an artist to transcend an existing artistic framework and to create radically new forms or a new style, technique, or school of art. It is often believed that one can exercise masterful skill in working within a framework and following existing rules well, but that something more than skill is required in order to create new rules and new standards for judgement (p.113).

Coleman Hawkins created something novel to improvised jazz by the creation of new rules and standards for future tenor saxophonists to, then, assimilate and break again. However, what is creative about improvisers? Historian Daniel Belgrad



considers practicing and improvising not to be contradictory terms since the latter “does not consist mainly in inventing new licks, but in stringing together learned licks and references in new and appropriate combinations”(Sterritt, p. 166).

James Lincoln Collier, jazz player, historian and teacher, indicates that most jazz is rooted in a basic vocabulary rather than an “anything goes” boundlessness. He says the typical improviser’s mind is:

...stuffed with a congeries of motifs, instrumental sounds, tiny figures, large structures, scales, chords, modes and the rest of it from which the player works through association (Sterritt, p. 166).

Fine Arts teacher David Sterritt, in his article *Revision, Prevision and the Aura of Improvisatory Art*, uses a term *prevision* that he considers important to the improviser’s art because:

...it is firmly imbricated with practices based less on rigorously spontaneous invention than on the inspired elaboration of pre-existing music material, notwithstanding the frequency with which a rhetoric of extemporaneous purity has been applied to it (p. 167).

According to his article “*Performance Theory*” by Albert Cohen, a similar concept was explored in the early sixteenth century by a French friar named Marin Mersenne. In his writings on early performance practices and theories in Western music, Cohen claims that Mersenne urges “performers who invent, but who do not understand the principles that underlie their inventions, to join theory to their knowledge, which he believes will result in their creating finer musical works” (p. 539). Cohen contends that Mersenne was “alone among contemporary scientists, not only to assign a primary role in his writings, but also to consider performance along with composition as central to the derivation of its theory” (p. 539). Cohen quotes Mersenne as saying musical works:

...of theorists are worthless compared with those made by [persons] who know no theory. Besides, theorists know only what they learn from practitioners, from whom they presume principles and experiences; this is why practice precedes theory (p. 539).

Leonard Bernstein, writing about jazz in *The Joy of Music*, would probably largely agree with Mersenne's aesthetic, uncharacteristic as it was for its time:

Besides, there has always been a certain shadow of indignity around music, particularly around the players of music. I suppose it is due to the fact that historically *players* of music seem to lack the dignity of *composers* of music. But this is especially true of jazz, which is almost completely a player's art, depending as it does on improvisation rather than composition. But this also means that the player of jazz is himself the real composer, which gives him a creative, and therefore *more* dignified, status. (p. 97).

I would argue a main reason behind this "shadow of indignity" cast upon jazz and other kinds of popular music is due to it being considered Dionysian or *earthy*. In the Apollonian realm of composed works representing the "pinnacle" of musical art, a Marin Mersenne, a Charlie Parker or a Coleman Hawkins cannot sit without humiliations of "lowering them to the ground where they belong". There is no coincidence that, by labeling something like jazz as *earthy*, it is therefore perceived as somehow *dirty*. One can't get much lower than that. Even so-called champions of jazz music like Bernstein occasionally held it as a "lesser music" through the language he often chose to describe it. If a composer, not a "mere player", you have more artistic merit to those educated to "know better".

Writing in 1936 in an essay entitled *The Negro and His Music*, Alain Locke challenged the dissenters of jazz who asserted that it lacked form and did not demand much skill to perform. He did, however, not withhold from moralizing as evidenced by the following caution:

...there is a vast difference between its first healthy and *earthy* expression in the original peasant paganism out of which it arose and its hectic, artificial and sometimes morally vicious counterpart which was the outcome of the vogue of artificial and commercialized jazz entertainment. The one is primitively erotic; the other decadently neurotic (p. 125).

In jazz's defense, Bernstein has some advice to give when cultural hierarchies of "low versus high art" rear their heads:

But I find I have to defend jazz to those who say it is low-class. As a matter of fact, all music has low-class origins, since it comes from folk music, which is essentially *earthy*. After all, Haydn minuets are only a refinement of simple, rustic German dances, and so are Beethoven scherzos. An aria from a Verdi opera can often be traced back to the simplest Neapolitan fisherman. (p. 97).

The music of Gustav Mahler is filled with "low-class" allusions and direct quotations of popular music from his time. His music was also "*earthy*". In a filmed interview shortly before he died, Gilles Deleuze discusses some reasons for his love of Gustav Mahler. Deleuze's concept of the "refrain", or "ritornello" as it is referred to here, encompasses a vital space in his philosophy of "musical becoming". In the film *Gilles Deleuze's ABC Primer*, he admits that:

...a musician that I admire and who has greatly affected me, Mahler, his *Song of the Earth* - for me, one can't say it better. This is perpetually like elements in genesis, in which there are perpetually little ritornellos sometimes based on two cowbells. I find extraordinarily moving in Mahler's works the way that all the little ritornellos, which are already musical works of genius - tavern ritornellos, shepherd ritornellos, etc. - the way they achieve a composition in a kind of great ritornello that will become the song of the *earth* (p. 5).

Despite the double authorship credited to *A Thousand Plateaus* with Félix Guattari, the recurring discussion of the "refrain", "ritournelle", "ritornello" and "little return" in Deleuze's individual works, such as *Desert Islands* and *Difference and Repetition*, makes one wonder if this concept of a "little tune" or rhythm,

repeated to oneself, is Deleuze's private philosophy of music or, as he might agree, his music of philosophy:

I might define the ritornello as a little tune, "tra-la-la-la." When do I say "tra-la-la?" I am doing philosophy in asking when do I sing to myself. On three occasions: I sing this tune when I am moving about in my territory, wiping off my furniture, radio playing in the background. So, I sing when I'm at home. Then, I sing to myself when not at home at nightfall, at the hour of agony, when I am seeking my way, and need to give myself courage by singing, tra-la-la. I'm heading home. And I sing to myself when I say "farewell, I am leaving, and I will carry you with me in my heart," it's a popular song, and I sing to myself when I am leaving home to go somewhere else (*Gilles Deleuze's ABC Primer*, p. 3).

This "little return" that Deleuze refers to is something to which I too shall return in this thesis. I will argue that it represents the personal tie each of us has to "our" music, the single link in a chain not forged by the "officers of taste" but by our own unique experiences. These idiosyncratic "little tunes" can bring us comfort in the times we feel we are "at home", we turn to them to give us strength when we are lost in our "hour of agony" and these "ritournelles" help ease the pain we feel when leaving those we love. These "little tunes," to which we regularly return, might also be shared by others. For, in *Gilles Deleuze's ABC Primer*, Deleuze declares, "This is all ritornellos of territories, of one particular territory and another that will become organized in the heart of an immense ritornello, a cosmic ritornello, in fact!" (p. 4). Ferruccio Busoni, in his essay *A New Esthetic (sic) for Music*, believes the "soul states" of individuals are collectively joined with the universe. If our individual "refrains" might appear unique, Busoni might argue that their real significance to us lies in the discovery that they exist outside of our earthly realm. Considered by his contemporaries to be both a "futurist" and "classicist" simultaneously, Busoni had a

great distaste for the “purely sensual” in music and was openly critical of Claude Debussy.

My own introduction to Busoni’s music resided in a recording of chamber music arranged by Arnold Schönberg. The first piece on the record was Schönberg’s setting of Busoni’s orchestral work *Berceuse élégiaque* (Cradle Elegy) for flute, clarinet, string quartet, harmonium and piano. It bore the descriptor “*Cradle-song of the man at the coffin of his mother, poem*” with the dedication: “In memoriam Anna Busoni: (Died October. 1909)”. This piece has fast become one of my personal “refrains”, in the spirit of Deleuze. At the time of my first hearing this recording by the Schönberg Ensemble in 1983, I had recently completed a minor in languages and was able to speak and write a modicum of German, an ability I confess is all but lost to me at the present time.

Before giving the English translation, I wish to quote Busoni’s four-line elegy in the original German so the reader can see the alliterative structure and sound his verses suggest. In the German, the letters “schw...” are pronounced phonetically ‘ʃv...’, therefore the “schw...” word opening each verse has a certain whispering *sforzando* to it:

Schwingt die Wiege des Kindes  
Schwankt die Wage seines Schicksals  
Schwindet der Weg des Lebens  
Schwindet hin die ewigen Fernen

*When the child’s cradle rocks  
The balance of his fate sways,  
The path of the living disappears,  
Sinks into the distance of eternity.*

This written elegy is never intended to be spoken or sung during the course of the music. To this moment, I still find this piece sublime. One could argue, as Kivy does, that this music likely “means something” to me because I have been provided a program of the information and my reliance upon “purely musical material” to achieve this meaning or feeling of sublimity is subject to doubt. However, I first heard the entire piece before reading the liner notes to the composition and was held captive. The fulfillment that I feel, in providing a musical example of what Busoni attempts to communicate through words, is what I believe Deleuze had in mind when he said, “I am doing philosophy in asking when do I sing to myself.”

It is also what Yaroslav Senyshyn might mean when, in order to better explain certain areas of philosophy to his students, it is necessary that he play the piano. I had the honour of being present in his music class during a number of these occasions, which were requisite of “philosophy through performance”. I vividly recall one such time that the playing of *Au lac de Wallenstadt* by Franz Liszt resolved a graduate class discussion and, from my perspective, to the complete satisfaction of all involved. This was not always the case in a class filled with passionately disparate individuals who prided themselves upon their perceptions of art. However, attempting to describe my subjective experiences with both the Busoni and the Liszt pieces, using a form of “objective” musical analysis acceptable to the “officials of taste,” is another issue that keeps music philosophy, and its inevitable proliferation through education, under a tight rein. In *Musical Aphorisms and Common Aesthetic Quandaries*, Senyshyn refers to Wittgenstein’s direction in his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, when confronted by such perplexities of ineffability: “That of which we

cannot speak of we must pass over in silence” (p. 115). Other than the playing of the music itself, how else might one better understand the following criticism Busoni levels at Debussy in his book *The Essence of Music?* Here, Busoni discusses *Berceuse élégiaque* and expresses frustration that the authorship of his music could get mistaken for Debussy, a composer whose aesthetic Busoni deemed incompatible with his own:

With this piece...I succeeded for the first time in hitting upon my own sound idiom and in *dissolving the form into feeling*. This made it all the more surprising to me to read of my work being taken for the art of the Frenchman Debussy. I want to correct this error firmly. Debussy’s art propels his personal and clearly defined feeling out of his own nature, into the outer world. I endeavor to draw upon the Infinite which surrounds mankind and to give it back in created form (p. 49).

In his compelling work *Musical Aphorisms and Common Aesthetic Quandaries*, Senyshyn begins by making inferences about music’s external and internal nature, which runs a close parallel to much of Busoni’s aesthetic:

Sound and silence as potentiation of music precedes human existence.

If music precedes existence then it can never be defined in absolute terms of thought...As the sound and silence that preceded our being, it is indeed music in everlasting potentiation.

In this sense sound can only be philosophically inferred as the “other,” outside music, which the pre-Socratic philosophers referred to mystically and metaphorically as “the music of the spheres”; it is the music outside of us and finds its origins in sounds indirectly related to us. It is what I prefer to call the Sound and Silence that define and are defined by each other in their potentiation for music. Thus this sound is music as potential or *dynamis* if intended to be music and perceived as such...

The notion of a possible pre-existence of music...is then defined by music as both a source and external entity.

A music which possibly or inferentially precedes existence is, of necessity, part of that possible catalyst of sound waves identified by modern-day physicists by which the universe may have formed (p. 113).

In *A Study of Beethoven*, music critic and poet Arthur Symons discusses the possible source of Beethoven's art as Symons understands through the writings of Schopenhauer:

Music, as Schopenhauer has made clear to us, is not a representation of the world, but an immediate voice of the world. The musician, he tells us, "reveals the innermost essential being of the world, and expresses the highest wisdom in a language his reason does not understand." "We may take the perceptible world, or nature, and music, as two different expressions of the same thing." "Accordingly, we might call the world 'embodied music', music differing from all other arts in this, "that it is not an image of phenomena," but represents "the thing itself which lies behind all appearances." In the language of the Schoolmen, "concepts are universalia post rem, actuality universalia in re, whereas music gives universalia ante rem" (p. 4).

Symons then invokes the "other" in his attempt to explain the ineffability of Beethoven's music as he experiences it:

It is thus that the musician joins hands with the child and the saint, if, as we may believe, the child still remembers something of that imperial palace whence he came, and the saint lives always in such a house not made with hands. The musician, through what is active in his art, creates over again, translates for us, that whole essential part of things which is ended when we speak, and deformed when we begin laboring to make it visible in marble, or on canvas, or through any of the actual particles of the earth (pp. 4-5).

The existence of experiential writing in music, such as that by Symons, on a matter so seemingly subjective and elusive as music, is reassuring. To assume that only the musical artist has that "special perception" into their own domain, leaves it fully open for criticism that art can only be comprehended or enjoyed by actual practitioners of art. Leonard Bernstein's preparations of his audiences in both his *Young People's Concerts* and *The Harvard Lectures* would be for little gain if he had seriously believed this. For pragmatic reasons, the artist without an audience is usually the sign of a short career ahead.



However, in his article *Language and the Interpretation of Music*, Leo Treitler suggests that the writings of artists might give more insight into what music means to us than the theorizing of musicologists and academicians might ever achieve. Treitler finds that the many different statements made by artists about the ambiguity of language and the preciseness of musical expression are fascinating and warrant our serious attention. This problem is disclosed in *Musical Aphorisms and Common Aesthetic Quandries* when Senyshyn summons Wittgenstein. When we make inferences about “external music’s existence”, one is cautioned, “That of which we cannot speak of we must pass over in silence” (p. 115). Treitler cites Robert Schumann’s advice on this subject, from his self-published “*Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*” (*New Journal of Music Criticism*). In an 1836 article, *Chopin’s Piano Concerto*, Schumann exclaims, “The best way to talk about music is to be quiet about it!” (p. 26). Treitler also refers to the musician Daniel Gottlieb Türk, who wrote that “certain subtleties of expression cannot really be described, they must be heard” (p. 27). Perhaps the most extensive writing examined by Treitler, is the reply Felix Mendelssohn gave in response to queries about the meanings laden in his *Songs Without Words*:

There is so much talk about music, and yet so little is said. For my part, I believe that words do not suffice for such a purpose... People often complain that music is too ambiguous; that what they should think they hear it is so unclear, whereas everyone understands the words. With me it is exactly the reverse, and not only with regard to an entire speech, but also with individual words. These, too, seem to me so ambiguous, so vague, so easily misunderstood in comparison to genuine music... The thoughts which are expressed to me by music that I love are not too indefinite to be put into words, but on the contrary, too definite... The same words never mean the same thing, can arouse the same feelings in one person as another, a feeling which is not expressed, however, by the same words... Words have many meanings, but music we could both understand correctly. Will you allow this

to serve as an answer to your question? At all events, it is the only I can give, although these, too, are nothing, after all, but ambiguous words! (p. 27).

Fittingly, in a description of the interview *Gilles Deleuze's ABC Primer*, Deleuze is questioned about the relationships many philosophers have had with music. Much of what Deleuze "says" to interviewer Claire Parnet is not by means of language but also by his body movement and requests for silence. When the interviewer Claire Parnet says that "even Foucault spoke about music", Deleuze gives a dismissive gesture when she says "Foucault" and instructs her that "Foucault didn't talk about music, it was a secret for him, his relations with music were completely a secret." Parnet says "Yes, he was very close to certain musicians" but Deleuze does not want to discuss it and says, "These are secrets that Foucault did not discuss." Parnet continues to pursue this, saying "Foucault was very close to the musical world, even if a secret". Deleuze says impatiently, "Yes, yes, yes...", as if to get her to change the subject.

In a filmed interview I saw as an undergraduate, Carl Jung was asked to which music he listened. Jung responded that he couldn't listen to it without being overcome by it, after which he could no longer function properly. Because of its debilitating effect upon him, Jung claimed that he no longer listened to music. In *Music and the ineffable*, Jankélévitch tells of how Leo Tolstoy had an "extraordinary sensitivity to Romantic music" and that "he was a rebel against the bewildering power of Chopin's fourth *Ballade*" (pp. 7-8). Hector Berlioz, in his published *Letter to the Princess Sayn-Wittgenstein*, confesses his struggle with composing music for the "dramatic symphony" *Romeo and Juliet*:

The real problem lies in finding the means of being *expressive* and *true* without ceasing to be a musician, and to find new ways of making the music dramatic... There is still another stumbling block ahead of me in my attempt to write the music for this drama. The emotions which I have to express affect me too much. This is unfortunate; for one must endeavor to do the passionate things coldly. It is that which hampered me when composing the adagio and the final scene of *Romeo et Juliette*. I thought that I would never be able to complete them (p. 213).

Igor Stravinsky, in *Conversations with Stravinsky*, admitted that he “disliked that direct expression of the composer’s own feelings are evident” in Alban Berg’s *Wozzeck* (p. 241). It is quite possible that all of these artists were in such direct communication with their own senses that their acute awareness of the ineffability of music was seen as a mixed blessing, even a curse at times, for them. All seem to express, in some way, a need to be “objective” and have some distance from, not only their feelings, but from their own work. This is another paradox of scientific positivism in operation in the social “sciences” and the arts. “Empirical conditions” must appear to exist, even when they might *really* be absent.

Feruccio Busoni, writing in *A New Esthetic for Music*, had a similar need to assume a certain aloofness with the emotional content of music. He seemed to believe, as did many of those who subscribed to the pre-Socratic belief in the “music of the spheres”, that music which exists outside of our earthly realm. This allowed Busoni to know just what in music was and what was not “of this earth”:

To music, indeed, it is given to set in vibration our human moods... But not the moving cause of these spiritual affections; - not the joy over an avoided danger, not the danger itself, or the kind of danger which caused the dread; an emotional state, yes, but not the psychic species of this emotion, such as envy, or jealousy; and it is equally futile to attempt the expression, through music, of moral characteristics (vanity, cleverness), or abstract ideas like truth and justice. Is it possible to imagine how a poor, but contented man could be represented by music? The contentment, the soul-state, can be interpreted by music; but where does the poverty appear, or the important ethical problem

stated in the words “poor, but contented”? This is due to the fact that “poor” connotes a phase of terrestrial and social conditions not to be found in the eternal harmony, and Music is part of the vibrating universe (p. 264).

Senyshyn, like Busoni, cautions those who would attribute moral

characteristics to music free of a text. In his article *Popular Music and the Intolerant Classroom*, Senyshyn advises the following:

Any music whatever it is, is not guilty of amorality unless it has a verbal text. This is evident to a philosophical modern mind but as we have seen this has not been the case for thinkers such as Plato and Aristotle. Ultimately there is no way one can ascribe a definite or even indefinite moral or amoral dimension to music without a text. Any such moral designations are purely subjective in nature. This is a ruthless statement but necessarily true. It is for this reason that we have musical dramas or the opera (see Senyshyn & Vézina, 2002) But having said this does not take away the fact that we can attempt to find moral or amoral dimensions to music and codify these in some kind of musical semiotics as is done today by various semioticians of music (pp. 8-9).

The Platonic concept that the music itself, and not the text, is responsible for negatively affecting the moral development of youth shall be expounded upon more in Part III of this thesis, Senyshyn makes a powerful statement about the possible censorious propositions these “musical semioticians” hold for music educators past, present and future. The various moral or immoral implications of the words “*earth*” or “*earthy*” given by Locke, Bernstein and Deleuze are signs that mark this “codification” of music to be either worthy or worthless for inclusion in music education.

The chances of advocating jazz studies in school for adherents to the art education of R.G. Collingwood are rather slim given his statement below about the genre in *The Principles of Art*, published a year prior to Bernstein’s more sympathetic defense of this style of music in *The Joy of Music*. Harkening back to the speech

theorists discussed in Part I, Theodore Gracyk, author of the book "*Rhythm and Noise*", makes this dry observation: "As so many bastardized variants of arousal theory, only the style of music to be castigated changes with the years" (p. 141).

Gracyk later quotes the following statement by Collingwood:

Thus music, in order to be representational, need not copy the noises made by bleating sheep, an express locomotive at speed, or a rattle in the throat of a dying man...The erotic music of the modern dance-band may or may not consist of noises like those made by persons in a state of sexual excitement, but it does most powerfully evoke feelings like those proper to such a state (p. 56).

This leads the "arousal theory" to mean something rather different than it might have to the early speech theorists. Collingwood, however, would probably be criticized by Kivy in assuming that musical representation and musical expression might stem from the same sources. Leonard Bernstein would concur with Kivy. In his third Harvard lecture entitled "*Musical Semantics*", Bernstein suggests:

When a piece of music "means" something to me, it is a meaning conveyed by the sounding notes themselves - what Eduard Hanslick called "sonorous forms in motion"...and I can report those meanings back to you precisely in terms of those forms. But when music "expresses" something to me, it is something that I am feeling, and the same is true of you and every listener (p. 135).

Bernstein is saying that purely musical elements are interpreted subjectively yet, like earlier speech theorists discussed in Part I, many of the feelings we listeners experience might be shared ones. However, he wishes to make it clear that no one person can have the exactly the same affective experience as another. This brings to mind a very important element of Kivy's theory of enhanced formalism. He, too, asserts the belief that emotions can be stirred by music but Kivy (1980) argues it:

...is essentially the "our song" phenomenon...No one should doubt that music can and does arouse emotions in this way. What we deny is that this has anything to do with musical expressiveness. And the fact that that so much of

the power music does have to arouse the emotions is due to private, idiosyncratic associations is itself additional reason for rejecting the arousal theory altogether as a theory of musical expressiveness (p. 30).

Kivy relies heavily upon the theories of Eduard Hanslick regarding the role that expressive properties play in music. According to Hanslick's writings, these properties play no role and, as evidenced by Bernstein's reference to Hanslick above, meaning is conveyed by the notes themselves. Ironically, Hanslick's academic theorizing and his own review of Brahms' First Symphony are not entirely consistent.

The following is taken from Hanslick's *Music Criticism, 1846-1899*:

In the first movement, the listener is held by fervent emotional expression, by Faustian conflicts, and by a contrapuntal art as rich as it is severe. The Andante softens this mood with a long-drawn-out, noble song, which experiences surprising interruptions in the course of the movement... The fourth movement begins most significantly with an Adagio in C minor; from darkening clouds the song of the woodland horn rises clear and sweet above the tremelo (sic) of the violins. All hearts tremble with the fiddles in anticipation. The entrance of the Allegro with its simple, beautiful theme, reminiscent of the "Ode to Joy" in the Ninth Symphony, is overpowering as it rises onward and upward to the end (p. 126).

Hanslick's allegiant review of his friend Brahms' work is similar to the steadfast loyalty that Theodore Adorno showed in his writings towards Alban Berg. Adorno cites that the forms, so wholly adhered to in the opera *Wozzeck*, are solely responsible for its expressive content. In *Alban Berg*, he states that "sound is always secondary, the result of strictly musical-thematic events and derived only from them (p. 88). Yet, despite Adorno's warning for performers and audience members to follow only the "absolute music" because it "completely absorbed the text", Adorno, like Hanslick, demonstrates his personal affinity for the music in expression not reflecting the "absolute" or "pure" music analysis he prescribes for others to use:

The orchestra makes the music real in the Cézannesque sense of *réaliser*. The entire compositional structure...becomes clear through color values...The art of sonoral putty, the subtle flow from one color into another, these are unparalleled. The atmosphere of this orchestra...is no mere mood painting. It is atmosphere derived from the power of nuance...the translation of even the subtlest compositional impulse into its sensuous equivalent (p. 86).

As is often the case with Adorno, his bias towards the Austrian-Germanic tradition of thematic development and formal structure leads him to brush away other compositional styles with an analysis based upon, on the surface at least, development of material according to this tradition. What has come to be noticed by many critics is his pronounced distaste for French, Russian and East European composers. In his book *Mahler: A Musical Physiognomy*, Adorno declares of the composer:

What in the potpourri was the necessity of indiscriminately assembly hackneyed melodies becomes in him the virtue of a structure that sensitively thaws the frozen groupings of accepted formal types. The coherence that they were supposed to guarantee is now founded on the fractured terseness of themes and forms, on the aspect that of the so-called national schools, Tchaikovsky or Dvořák. The fictitiously popular specification of the themes places them so far in the foreground as to devalue the mediating categories of the classical tradition, where they invoke them, to theatrical claptrap or padding (p. 35).

Adorno makes frequent defenses for inclusion of these “hackneyed melodies” (p. 35) in Mahler’s symphonies. Adorno’s treachery in the following passage, through his cunning ability to use camouflaging language, justifies “the doing of nothing” as “the doing of something.” This is an unfair ruse for Adorno to play upon listeners of Mahler by exhuming his musical remains and suggesting that an historically subsequent composition aesthetic lay with him. What literal rendering of popular songs, themes or motives left *unmediated* by Mahler is somehow not an “indiscriminant assemblage” as it would be in the hands of Stravinsky, Dvořák, Bizet or Tchaikovsky:

What in them was involuntarily vulgar becomes in Mahler a provocative alliance with vulgar music. His symphonies shamelessly flaunt what rang in all ears, scraps of melody from great music, shallow popular songs, street ballads, hits...From the potpourri-like late Romantic pieces he takes over the striking and catchy individual coinages, but eliminates the trivialized connecting material. In its place he develops relationships concretely from the characters. Sometimes he lets these collide without transition, showing solidarity with Schoenberg's later criticism of mediation as something ornamental, superfluous (p. 35).

This latter statement displays Adorno's devotion to advancing the musical aesthetic of the Second Viennese School at any cost, even historical accuracy. Schönberg's remark about the "ornamental, superfluous" nature of mediation came many years following Mahler's death. Adorno wished to lionize not only Berg as his teacher but, more important to Adorno as philosopher, to lionize Berg's aesthetic as it connected to Schönberg. By further extending the lineage of Schoenberg and his disciples beyond to Mahler as ancestor, Adorno has assured some place for himself in this Viennese system of artistic inheritance. In *Alban Berg* from *Sound Figures*, Adorno writes of Berg that, "it is easy to comprehend his achievement as having formed a link with the past, as securing the connection between the innovations of the moderns with tradition" (p. 76).

Adorno's regular observance of Viennese concert audience behaviour must have given him good reason to believe in the ability of modern music to discourage and confront society's complacency. In a morosely humorous section of the book, "*Arnold Schoenberg's Journey*", which chronicles numerous Viennese premiere performances of works by Mahler, Schönberg, Berg and Webern, Allen Shawn describes the frequency of disruptions, fistfights and knife incidents which occurred at many of these events. A public railway official named Josef Polnauer, both an



admirer of Mahler and a student of Schoenberg, was a “reassuring presence” to have during premieres because of his physical size and strength:

At the premiere of Berg’s *Seven Songs*, he (*Polnauer*) was cut in the face by a knife while coming to the defense of Gustav Mahler. Mahler had turned to silence a loudly protesting man sitting behind him in the audience. When the disgruntled audience member upped the ante by saying to Mahler the equivalent of “I hiss at your unspeakable symphonies, too,” Polnauer jumped into the fight and was cut (pp. 54-55).

Perhaps the protesting gentleman had one right idea when choosing not to use words to describe Mahler’s symphonies, as has been an argument in this paper. Yet, words are constantly necessary to objectify and justify certain instances of modern music. “No western musical structure has ever lent itself so readily to verbal “explanation” as the contemporary one, or felt so keenly the need to be able to do so (Subotnik, p. 373). Guided by Subotnik’s criticisms of contemporary music’s reliance upon these explicative requisites, Adorno is very much a purveyor of “the idea”, on one hand, and a sentimentalist heavily cloaked in language, on the other. Like Mahler and Schönberg, Adorno too was an exile from his home of Vienna. Whereas Mahler left for America to take up a conducting post in New York, Schönberg and Adorno both fled when the Nazi Party came into power, fearing Hitler’s promise to “reunite” Austria with Germany. Berg, however, remained in Vienna. Adorno must have experienced a kind of melancholic nostalgia when writing the following passage relating Mahler’s folk elements to those present in Berg’s opera *Wozzeck*:

His (Berg’s) ambivalent relationship to the folk song, in which his identification with the victims assumes musical shape, would be unthinkable without the Mahler whose marches resonate with sorrow for the deserter (p. 77).

Adorno demonstrated much ambivalence towards both folk and popular forms inherent in the art music of Vienna. His benign tolerance of them ended there and his overall writings on the subjects showed complete distrust of both popular music forms as art and in the negative social effects of popular music. Jazz, as well, was viewed as a kind of sickness in the culture. In the study *On Popular Music*, Adorno characterized there being “two spheres of music”: popular music and serious music. In the former is “pseudo-individualized”, “standardized structure” with unrelated, unstable elements while, in the latter, exists idiosyncratic, varied structure having formal unity. In this study, Adorno states:

One possible method of achieving this clarification would be an historical analysis of the divisions as it occurred in music production and of the roots of the two main spheres. Since, however, the present study is concerned with the actual function of popular music in its present status, it is more advisable to follow the line of characterization of the phenomenon itself as it is given today than to trace it back to its origins. This is the more justified as the division into the two spheres of music took place in Europe long before American popular music arose. American music from its inception accepted the division as something pre-given, and therefore the historical background of the division applies to it only indirectly. Hence we seek, first of all, an insight into the fundamental characteristics of popular music in the broadest sense (p. 437).

Although the scope chosen by Adorno for his critique was confined to then current manifestations of American popular music, it would have been interesting to see if any of the previous European varieties of popular music had more redeeming qualities to him than the American examples he chose to pursue. In his study, Adorno errs in tacitly assuming that Americans accepted this dichotomization of the “two spheres of music” as “pre-given”, an example of Adorno’s commonly criticized “Eurocentric”, or more accurately, “Austrio-Germanic” views. His inclusion of “jazz” as popular music, and the song examples for this that he gave, were all based upon

models he saw as “American” but were and have been subject areas written about and often chastised for centuries in European popular or “secular” music. In *Popular Music and the Intolerant Classroom*, Yaroslav Senyshyn makes the following statement:

But the essence of what historians refer to as ‘secular music’ truly was popular music, as we understand our own contemporary popular music, in every way that we designate the term ‘popular’ except in the actual use of harmony and modality which was obviously different in any of the past historical periods. But many if not all the other ingredients that characterize popular music are there... (p. 6).

Senyshyn brings to mind a particular irony, even hypocrisy, that musicologists now permit the “serious” listening of secular music, not because it contains elements of the “Werktreu” (“*true work*”) or “work concept” that Schönberg and Adorno exalted, but because it is now perceived to be part of our historical fabric and thus, acceptable. I think of the “classy” guise in which many of the available recordings of historical secular music appeared, released on “sub-labels”, beginning in the 1960’s. The major classical recording companies, at this time of “interest” in the so-called authentic movement, seized a lucrative opportunity to “dress up” largely secular works in the garb of “serious music”. Decca Records had the Telefunken series “das alte Werk” (*the old work*), “Musik und ihre Zeit” (*music and its time*) while Deutsche Grammophon had *Archiv Produktion*. Philips Records had the “Seon” line and EMI carried the “Reflexe: Stations in European Music” series. Despite these companies being later swallowed up by major recording corporations, many of them still carry these “sub-labels” with them. These music releases retain with them a superficial sense that they are fully accepted into the “serious” music category, yet their separateness from the major label monikers also demonstrates the harbouring of anti-

secular sentiment inherited for centuries.

Adorno's steadfast duty to uphold the ideal of the "work-concept" in music, as incomprehensible it may have been to the majority of people listening to those works, was somehow rationalized by him to carry a greater political significance. To Adorno, its separateness represented a more genuine critique of the society which flocked to listen to "standardized" popular fare such as the "static" rhythms of jazz or songs "manufactured" in "Tin Pan Alley." In *The Politics of Musical Interpretation*, Lydia Goehr observes:

Adorno articulated one position. He maintained that music plays a political or 'critical' role in society – to emancipate and demystify it. This role is possible because music occupies a special and autonomous position within society. Instead of being functional as an ordinary tool is functional, music's function is 'to have no function'. In place of a function, music has a hidden and mysterious redemptive power, a power that resides in music's essential musical and hidden form. What Adorno achieved was what romantic theory achieved earlier: he gave credence to the belief that music's hidden content could simultaneously be purely musical and political (p. 188).

This concept that music alone can make a profound political statement, coherent to the listener, is an abstraction that most average people would not comprehend and is tantamount to mind reading. Such has "progressed" the "idea" according to Adorno's advocated aesthetic of modern music, which now, Subotnik might add, surpasses "the medium as a locus of artistic value" (p. 372). Wayne Bowman, in *Philosophical Perspectives on Music*, concurs with Subotnik and writes:

The only way to be true to its individuality is apparently to renounce all ties to the other. This then is the central dilemma Adorno's theory creates for modern music. To exercise its emancipatory potential it must be autonomous. But autonomy leads to isolation and ultimately the inability to reach the very people it must in order to reach its potential. The result is a rupture of the relationship between musical structure and meaning (p.333).

Despite Adorno's participation, but not membership, in the critical theorist "circle", this aberration of the "work-concept" is exclusive and elitist in its proposed consequence. John Street, in *Rock, pop and politics*, makes the following observation:

Adorno's claims about standardization and pseudo-individuation within popular music, and the corporate sources of both, would see such things as Live Aid as sustaining the dominant order. There is little reason to suppose that music can do anything more than reinforce pre-existing sympathies and trends. Against this stands those who want to present popular music as a weapon and as a source of group identity. For them, audiences are actively involved in the consumption of their music; and they can use it as a means of articulating an alternate vision. Consumption is imbued with political significance – more than that, it is a form of collective identity. And as such, it establishes an alternative to the prevailing order. Popular culture comes to be as important, politically, as the workplace and the state. It becomes the political expression and resource of the marginalized and dispossessed (p. 251).

Although the political messages, or lack thereof, to be found in "revolutionary" contemporary art music might not have been decipherable by the vast majority of concert goers, Stephen Bronner offers this explanation for the lack of direct language used by Adorno and others active in the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research. Formed with a distinct interest in "abolishing social injustice", participants in this school required the use of language not readily comprehended by most laypeople, lest they be arrested for political subversion. In *On Critical Theory and Its Theorists*, Bronner explains:

Concerns of this sort are often reflected in the attacks on the difficult style employed by critical theorists. The heritage of dialectical philosophy surely had an impact; the complex use of complex concepts often justifiably demanded a complex style. Especially in the ideologically charged postwar context, however, members of the Institute also employed an "Aesopian" form of writing; indeed, often from fear or self-serving purposes, they wished to hide their Marxism and used the highly abstract Hegelian language for that reason. But there is also a theoretical justification for their abstruse style. Even while concern was expressed with fostering enlightenment attitudes in works like *The Authoritarian Personality*, which was directed by Adorno, the

famous analysis of the culture industry implied that popularity would necessarily "neutralize" whatever emancipatory message a work retained (p. 201).

This brings in to focus the concept, returned to many times in this paper, that our use of language can become so enmeshed with our art, that it can become our art. Adorno's tenure with Alban Berg was not simply a study of music composition for him but it was, perhaps more importantly, an apprenticeship for his individual writing style. This Adorno adapted to his own personal art of writing. Writing in *Alban Berg*, Adorno admitted his indebtedness to Berg for the guidance he was given in both musical and in written composition:

With loving care he devoted himself to freeing me of my compositional inhibitions, just as – very different from the way Schoenberg treated his students – he always encouraged me;...In order to prevent my getting too involved in details at the expense of overall, or in order to keep a piece going when I was ready to despair, he advised me to write out just one or two voices over long stretches, possibly even without specific notes, just rhythms or contour, neumatic (sic) sketching, as it were; later I transferred that trick to my literary technique. (p. 33).

Tia DeNora, in her book *After Adorno*, examines some of the ways his writing technique reflected his musical aesthetic. DeNora quotes Adorno, who declared that, "defiance of society includes defiance of its language" (p. 70). This sheds light upon his desire for Schönberg's language of modern music to be spoken by all considering themselves a composer. DeNora relates a letter to composer Ernst Krenek, in which Adorno, "saw a 'liberation' of tones as 'tonic' and 'dominant', 'sub-dominant' and 'leading tone' as analogous to the utopian 'association of free men'"(p. 70). Adorno took this metaphor to heart and began "transposing it from musical to the philosophical" (p. 70). DeNora points out that in his "more mature work", Adorno

admitted “while music and philosophy were not identical enterprises, there were similarities between critical consciousness and musical compositions” (p. 71).

Adorno is an example of philosophy and music which has had profound effects upon music education. Virtually no book on popular culture or music can avoid at least a passing reference to him. Despite Adorno’s vigorous assertions about the hazards in society’s embracing jazz and popular song, he did not foresee that the popular music begun in the very decade of his death, the nineteen sixties, would be the music that many firmly believe could change consciousness for the better, as easily as it could for the worse. The following section of this thesis shall continue to focus upon popular music forms, notably that of “rock music”. As in opera and jazz before, it too has met with the extremes of joyful acceptance and bitter rejection. In this style of music, even more reference to Plato and what music is befitting of a moral society are given. Adorno, the philosopher and social critic, follows us to the next section of this paper, as does Adorno, the musician and friend of “the artist”. His vivid example, which embodies both the powers and weaknesses of language in the arts, has been explored previously under other names, with other philosophies, periods of history and genres of music and drama. There are still more “Adornos” yet to come.

### Part III: Making Order From Sense

**Popular music constitutes the dregs of musical history.**

Theodore Adorno

**We should distrust the *writing* of music: it is an occupation for moles, and it ends by reducing the vibrant beauty of sound itself to a dreadful system where two and two make four. Music has known for a long time what the mathematicians call “the folly of numbers”.**

Claude Debussy

**So it is that the best songs are ones that are like a thing that needs to be, that probably already existed -- if elsewhere or otherwise. Conversely, the worst songs, the ones that refuse and resist their own birthing, the ones forever marred and scarred, are those that lack sure footing on the stilts that lift up *what is* from the dark, bottomless depths of *what is not*.**

Jose Marquez (2004)

**Music is in fact not without ambiguity...because it is at once the intellectual love of an order and a measure beyond the senses, and an affective pleasure that derives from bodily vibrations.**

Gilles Deleuze (1988)

Arbitrary divisions between secular and sacred music have existed throughout the history of Western music. Arguably, the general shift in power from the church to the state resulted in an amended need to maintain these differences, drawing, instead, lines between “art” or “serious” music and popular music. Theodore Adorno, Peter Kivy and Leonard Bernstein have fostered, to varying degrees, the concept that music, in its totality, can only be grasped when listening to “serious” music. This assumption is questioned by Joanna Hodge, Jerrold Levinson and Ruth Subotnik. It is suggested that this imposition of a corrective to subjective listening has sent many away from “art music”, only to seek satisfaction in popular forms such as jazz and rock. It is considered that these popular forms allow their listeners a more direct



communication of feeling, an area increasingly discouraged in most contemporary music. Those contemporary composers, who are able to attract a public based upon a more sentient, than strictly, intellectual appeal, are frequently chastised for “lowering the standards” of art and are sometimes likened with popular musicians, as if meaning to insult them yet again. Those who would generally defend popular music often have difficulty in accepting its forms and non-notational traditions in composition as being “legitimate”, in addition to their reluctance to see all music, not just popular music, as a social construct. World and popular music’s social functions are often mistaken as being transient and rely specifically upon youth culture.

The persistent bias of personal taste, cloaked in the garb of the “objective language” of science, has been an area of concern throughout this thesis. Philosophers continue to advance their own tastes, in an attempt to negate choices others might make about music. Regularly, the ideals of ancient Greek culture, as a “paradise lost”, are summoned, only to be recognized as manipulations by the “guardians of taste”, who assert their own needs, often with underlying political motivations. As Theodore Adorno has attempted to demonstrate how “pure music” modernist compositions contain, through their autonomy, political statements, he also tries to negate the possibilities of the popular song from also attaining this potential for political significance. In light of popular music’s overwhelming dominance as a social force since the decade of Adorno’s death, the 1960’s, his assessment of this music appears to have been misinformed.

In Theodore Adorno's study *On Popular Culture*, in comparing a "standardized" song to "serious music" forms such as a symphonic movement, a scherzo or a minuet, he asserts that the listener of the song:

...becomes prone to evince stronger reactions to the part than to the whole. His grasp of the whole does not lie in the living experience of this one concrete piece of music he has followed. The whole is pre-given and pre-accepted, even before the actual experience of the music starts (p. 439).

According to Adorno, "serious" music listeners, using the specific examples of the first movement of Beethoven's *Symphony No. 7* and his *Appassionata*, have a greatly contrasting listening experience. He claims that "every detail derives its musical sense from the concrete totality of the piece which, in turn, consists of the life relationship of the details and never of a mere enforcement of a musical scheme... Only through the whole does it acquire its particular lyrical and expressive quality" (p. 439). Adorno makes some fundamental errors in these assumptions. His first is to assume that the whole of the popular song is pre-ordained and given for the listener. Certainly, most song forms have generalized structures that consist of, in varying orders, verses, choruses, and middle sections or bridges. However, similar predictions can be made about a minuet or a scherzo.

The common features in both minuet and scherzo are  $\frac{3}{4}$  time or meter. This, too, is pre-given. According to the *Harvard Dictionary of Music*, a scherzo also contains "vigorous rhythm, a certain abruptness of thought involving elements of surprise and whim, and a kind of bustling humor that ranges from the playful to the sinister" (p. 755). This use of the "element of surprise" could qualify as a negative against "serious music", based upon Adorno's own criteria for critiquing popular music. The following is the entire list of the song-styles that Adorno believed existed

in all of American popular music: “mother songs, home songs, nonsense or “novelty” songs, pseudo-nursery rhymes, laments for a lost girl” (p. 438).

The other flaw which Adorno makes is one which harkens back to “the idea” or the “work-concept”. This is the notion that only through listening to a piece of “serious” music, as opposed to a popular song, a jazz standard or even a jazz improvisation, can one achieve the “heightened” level of listening to something in its “concrete totality”.

Peter Kivy, in *Music Alone*, would agree with Adorno that listening *in toto* is possible to do. Bringing to memory Adorno’s proclivity for explicative language in music, so shares Kivy a similar belief:

I am now suggesting that we customarily take a person’s musical understanding to be evidenced by, to be constituted, really, by his or her ability to describe the musical happenings perceived, thought about, enjoyed... The more there is for one to perceive, the more there is for one to enjoy... And when one thinks of evidence for musical understanding, the ability to provide descriptive analysis is, I would suggest, what one ordinarily has in mind. The detail and accuracy of such descriptions give evidence of an intentional object of musical perception that is both more complex and more extensive than the ordinary music lover would command (pp. 98-99).

This cognitivist perspective is perplexing for those of us humans without a musical score sitting on our laps at all times when listening to music. I have always had a mixture of pity and awe for those individuals who carried scores with them to concerts, often with heads down during the entire performance. Is Kivy correct in assuming that most music lovers don’t have the requisite language to give a detailed and accurate musical analysis? Are the only people allowed to have a say about their musical experiences the ones with the scores on their laps or those who have extensive backgrounds in “how to listen correctly”, similar to those “converted” by

Leonard Bernstein in the *Omnibus* or *Harvard Lectures*? It is no wonder that popular music is as dominant in society as it is, given the “serious” arrogance of those like Kivy, Bernstein and Adorno. Their presumption that we all should be able to objectively and accurately describe our experiences belies their own subjective natures and personal tastes which are evidenced through their various choices of “masterpieces.”

Adorno asserted that, in art music “every detail derives its musical sense from the concrete totality of the piece... which... consists of the life relationship of the details” (p. 439). In her essay *Aesthetic Decomposition*, Joanna Hodge argues that all art works have their own “temporal structure” and that a suspension of “real time” when listening to music often occurs. She makes the following suggestions:

Analysis of music...sets out differences between conceptions of time and transcendence, which turns out to have striking equivalencies to the relation to time experienced by human beings, in questioning their own identities. To grasp a piece of music as a single structure, it is necessary both to grasp its temporal structure and to suspend the fragmentation which extension through time tends to impose on the process required to grasp the coherence and unity of the piece of music is the same process as is required to grasp the coherence and unity of a single life, whereby a sense of individual identity can be constructed (p. 257).

The fragmentation that results when “listening for,” as Ruth Subotnik might add, the concrete totality of the piece of music is something that happens with most functioning humans. Hodge is accurate when she experiences difficulty in understanding the “life” of a musical work any more than she would that of a “single life” of an individual’s sense of self, which is never static and usually changes at the first hint of its own impending analysis.

Jerrold Levinson is equally supportive of the position advanced by Hodge and defends the listening habits of the musical layperson. The opening words of *Music in the Moment* strongly states this position:

No doubt some people never heard much in music before they acquired conscious insight into its large-scale form. And surely there are others who, having acquired analytical dispositions and descriptive technical resources in the course of their musical education, found their fundamental listening transformed to a truly significant degree. But I am not one of them, and I suspect that such listeners are not the norm among those who can rightly claim both to know and to love the bulk of what constitutes the broad repertoire of classical music. It is an implicit aim of this book to defend such listeners – ones who, though untutored, are experienced, attentive, and passionate (ix).

Levinson blames the musical intelligentsia for driving many people away from classical music due to their overbearing demands for “correct” listening:

It is dispiriting to think of the many persons fully capable of appreciating the glories of classical music, to speak of no other kind – such as jazz – who have turned away without even venturing to cross the threshold, disheartened by the mistaken belief, which music theorists and commentators often do little to dispel, when they are not actively promoting it, that elaborate apprehensions of the form and technique of music are necessary to understanding it, and thus reaping its proper rewards (p. 174).

Gunther Schuller laments a similar “Paradise Lost” in his lecture at Goucher College. Schuller, criticized in Part I of this paper for his inability to address that the language considered requisite to understanding contemporary music was incompatible to experience, now makes a very astute observation why young people have largely deserted the classical camp:

In a culture which feeds on the senses in a big way, particularly the visual and aural senses (films and music), they have turned to rock and other directly communicating contemporary forms for their musical nourishment. Rather than gaining young audiences, we composers have lost that front line which artists of the past could be sure would come to their support, if only in reaction to the old (p. 175).

As Schuller suggests that popular forms, such as rock music, are “directly communicative”, Ruth Subotnik proffers her reasons why popular music has presently established itself so firmly in our culture:

In part because it enjoys the superior social power of a generalized structure, popular music has been able to make more effective use than has contemporary music of human strengths that are implicit (Adorno notwithstanding) in its situation. Whereas art music has been unable to make a socially compelling case for individual values, popular music has persuaded millions of individuals, in a way that is felt not to be coercive, of an advantage to be found in general values. It has turned its own state of mere, nontranscendent physical existence into a sensuously valued experience (p. 388).

Subotnik also argues that popular music benefited and became enriched by “high art” just as contemporary music should be visionary enough to seize upon the possibilities that the medium of video (p. 387) might offer it, should it have hopes to survive as a viable music and not be relegated to the status of “terribly innovative museum piece.” Because most contemporary music bears an aesthetic which insists that it judge itself, based upon an idiosyncratic “idea as work,” and not upon publicly valued standards of excellence, Subotnik further believes that:

...contemporary popular music does better than contemporary art music at characterizing the expressive parameters of style in its culture in the sense of defining the stylistic strengths, as opposed to the weaknesses, of that culture. It is even to suggest that as a genre, contemporary popular music is better than contemporary art music is art music because it is in the refinement of general values that modern Western culture permits a capacity for excellence. It is to suggest that in a culture no longer committed to the elitism that nurtured great art, popular music does well what its culture allows to be done well (p. 387).

Although some forms of popular music might not easily fit into widely held categories of “capacity for excellence”, Subotnik makes an accurate assessment of the “state of the art.” Many modern composers, through their alienating aesthetic principles, have become victims by their own design. This has been accomplished

often through atonal music, or by others with a volume which assaults the senses. Subotnik does not, however, bear mentioning that there are some modern composers who do not uphold this public impasse to their works by composing music of general immediacy. I run the risk of spoiling my own and others' listening experiences with much of this music by trying to explain exactly *what* I enjoy about it. Therefore, in the spirit of the ineffable nature of music, I won't. I will report that much of the music is, more often than not, tonally based and accessible to those who don't want to carry around a score each time they listen to contemporary art music. Many of the compositions by John Taverner, Pēteris Vasks, Valentin Silvestrov, Giya Kancheli, Gidon Kremer, Arvō Pärt and Henryk Gorécki are, I shall hazard a guess, not requisite of a musical map to enjoy these "works."

There are, however, dissenting voices who would not have us sit so comfortably with music that is not necessary to involve strategies and codes for our immediate sensuous satisfaction. In the mammoth manifesto on his musical taste, *The Aesthetics of Music*, Roger Scruton belittles two of the composers previously named, saying, "thanks to composers like Gorécki and Taverner, the bourgeois ear is again being opened to music" (p. 507). Scruton claims that atonal music "threatened the musical culture, by disparaging the natural bourgeois life on which it depends" (p. 507). Some background information is necessary to have an understanding for why Scruton may have disliked Gorécki's later period music so much. Despite publishing and recording the piece sixteen years earlier, Gorécki was nearly sixty years old when a new recording of his Third Symphony became the bestselling classical music recording in history. One can hear Schönberg mumbling, "If it is for all it is not art"

(Frith, 1998). Scruton, in defense of modernism, gives this commentary with Gorécki in mind, claiming that:

...a new bourgeois audience is emerging – one which does not feel the force of modernism’s bleak imperatives. It is as yet a fragile audience: its ears muddled by pop music, its body starved of rhythm, and its soul untutored in religious hope... We should not be surprised if this new audience prefers easy homophony to complex polyphony, endless repetition to continuous development, block chords to voiced harmonies, regular beat to shifting accent, and boundless chant to bounded melody. For such are the expectations fostered by popular culture (p. 507).

Witnessing such deferential castigation of one who would dare to express himself through a music latent with profound personal meaning and empathy for human suffering is dispiriting, yet it is to be fully expected. The intellectualization of art music, at the expense of the senses, has been a troubling issue since Schönberg and his lot raised the flags of their “new aesthetic.” If Scruton chooses to condemn a music based upon modernist requirements such as difficulty, complexity, continuity, and development, then so be it. He is not saying anything new that, historically, hasn’t already been leveled at those who prefer their own personal, and not prescribed, forms of expression. In the book *Sadhana*, poet Rabindranath Tagore offers this insight:

In some stage of our growth, in some period of our history, we try to set up a special cult of beauty and pare it down to a narrow circuit, so as to make it a matter of pride for a chosen few... In the history of aesthetics there also comes an age of emancipation, when the recognition of beauty in things great and small become easy and when we see it more in the unassuming harmony of common objects than in things startling in their singularity – so much so that we have to go through the stages of reaction when in the representation of beauty we try to avoid everything that is obviously pleasing and that has been crowned by the sanction of convention. We are then tempted in defiance to exaggerate the commonness of commonplace things, thereby making them aggressively uncommon (p. 109).

This beauty, appreciated in “commonplace things”, in music of a kind that



communicates directly to us *individually* and not by using compositional “exaggerations” which disguise their “commonness” until they have become “aggressively uncommon”, could also be applied to popular music. Theodor Adorno, Peter Kivy, Roger Scruton and numerous others have negated the beauty of simpler structures, based upon this “requirement” for developed, complex, large-scale works because, often, there is that much more material to enjoy. This smacks in itself of the so-called materialist bourgeois culture that modernism allegedly aims to confront. In *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works*, Lydia Goehr surmises:

Consider, finally, how critical some persons are of popular music, on the grounds that a given song has a simple form or that the music ‘doesn’t last’, or that popular music is expressive of ‘infantile’ emotions. Yet a certain kind of simplicity is required in much of the world’s music precisely because of its acknowledged social, political, or religious function. Such music is not designed to surpass time, or to stand its test. It is used by particular social groups to express their socio-political desires. Its values and significance does not derive from a romantic aesthetic, nor, therefore, does it fair evaluation (p. 252).

Although I support Goehr’s basic premise that the aesthetics most often used to judge these musics are incompatible, I disagree with her assumption that popular music or world music are essentially temporal and might not achieve longevity. Most world music persists because it *has* stood the test of time as an integral part of each distinct culture. For instance, all “classical masterpieces” pale in significance to music from rites which serve to bring the young into adulthood. In this regard, world musics and popular music may be very closely related. Peter Christenson and Donald Roberts discuss, among other areas, the role of music in the socialization of adolescents in their book *It’s Not Only Rock & Roll: Popular Music in the Lives of Adolescents*:

On average, . . . adolescents spend somewhere between four and five hours a day listening to music and watching music videos – at least as much time as they spend watching standard television fare and more than they spend with their friends outside of school. Their involvement with music media and the music culture extends well beyond sheer time spent. Music alters and intensifies their moods, furnishes much of their slang, dominates their conversations, and provides the ambiance at their social gatherings. Music defines the crowds and cliques they run in. Music personalities provide models for how they act and dress. Given the pivotal role of music in adolescent life, it seems obvious that oversimplified, formulaic thinking about it will not do. The decisions we make for and about our youth and their music should be grounded in something deeper and more reliable than casual observation and dramatic news reports (p. 8).

Anyone who has been intimately acquainted with young people or has had the pleasure of teaching them, knows that making decisions *about* youth is far different, not to mention far easier, than making decisions *for* them. A book that has achieved a wide readership with a considerable number of music educators, practicing within my immediate circle in the last few years, is *Who Needs Classical Music? Cultural Choice and Value* by Julian Johnson. His position is essentially one of a rationalist - formalist, believing music has a “kind of language”, values so-called objective, technical descriptions of music over the personal experience of it, and has a vision of popular culture as being fundamentally aberrant. Many of my fellow teachers uphold this book as a sort of bible that “proves correct” the aesthetic they were taught in their own music education. In this book, Johnson claims that popular music is strictly “the music of youth”, in that it is created by youth and aimed at commercial consumption by youth. Frequent lofty claims of its worthlessness abound throughout his writings:

But the commercial value and cultural ubiquity of youth music should not be confused with questions of musical value *beyond* the social milieu for which it is primarily significant. In other words, youth music is used, like other areas of fashion, as part of teenage rites of passage that include formulating individual identities in relation to collective groups, articulating independence

from a parental generation, and coping with excess libidinal energy in the absence of other obvious outlets for it (p. 44).

What follows is an application of the previously criticized “work-concept” or “idea”, which repeats similar preoccupations with autonomous structures, surpassing boundaries, and changing rules that would make Adorno bristle with pride. Johnson even pays homage, in the book’s preface, to the “almost constant presence of Theodore W. Adorno”. Later, we also become introduced to Johnson’s obsession with the word “transgression”:

The idea of transgression, of breaking rules, for example, is every bit as important to classical music as it is to popular music, but one is essentially an inward, musical matter while the other is an outward, performative display. An important adolescent rite of passage, for which music often serves as a vehicle, hinges on the ritualized transgressive acts by which a parental culture is symbolically rejected. Inwardly, the musical materials and their deployment in such acts are often largely conventional. Classical music, at least before the twentieth century, rarely exhibits outwardly transgressive moments, but inwardly, within the musical discourse itself, it is frequently predicated on the idea of exceeding its own formal boundaries, of a radical reformulation of its materials and a transgression of the boundaries of the familiar (p. 46).

Johnson’s frequent evocation of the word, and its variants, becomes both sinister and evangelical:

The transgressions of popular culture seem more weighty than those of classical music because they are more immediate and more concrete, but they are also more ephemeral. The radical proposition of Schoenberg’s music has hardly ameliorated since he wrote it, nearly a century ago. Similarly, the transgressions of a Schoenberg or a Picasso are not the gestures of adolescence, left behind for a more conventional adult life. Their transgressions are lifelong because they are more than simple refusals. Such art is concerned with the permanent reformulation of aesthetic elements – not merely a rejection of something, but the projection of an alternate vision (p. 46).

Johnson clearly falters when he suggests Schönberg made something “permanent” when he devised and formalized twelve-tone composition. To suggest

this is “lifelong” assumes that this formulation, like Picasso’s cubism, has a parallel with discovering immutable laws of nature. This is a scientific rationalist position of a most extreme nature. Johnson continues in his crusade on “adult music” versus “youth music”:

What remains hard to understand is why adult culture should also be shaped to such a degree by what is, after all, youth culture. But the distinction I am making is of course not clearly defined in contemporary culture. Our collective fascination with the imagery of youth and youthfulness effectively dissolves any boundaries between the cultural diets of children, adolescents, and adults. Seven-year-old children and thirty-seven-year-old adults are equally fascinated, it seems, by a musical culture defined almost exclusively by the images of singers between the ages of seventeen and twenty-seven (p. 45).

It is difficult to fathom Johnson’s struggle with comprehending how adult culture might be “fascinated” by youth culture. This same obsession with “youth” does not yield from entering the “objective” world of the classical musician, so highly held in esteem by Johnson. In his article *The Crisis: A Practical Realization of Kierkegaard’s Aesthetic Philosophy*, Yaroslav Senysyhn notes that, “Another significant issue for the artist is that of the youth cult. Musicians particularly suffer from this form of discrimination” (p. 258). Thomas Mann’s “*A Death in Venice*” certainly addressed this area on some level. The quest for the “fountain of youth” and Christianity’s belief in eternal life both, arguably, spring from a similar desire to avoid aging and death. By closely watching our youth and, perhaps, participating in their activities, we might, at the very least, *feel* young. Despite such conjecture, there is still no shame in simply admitting, as an adult, that you *enjoy* popular music, no matter what prominent musicologists might say adult music *should* be. Christensen and Roberts also question previous delineations of adolescent onset based strictly

upon age. Concepts such as “youth music” or “adult music”, once thought clearly distinguishable from one another, may be so blurred as to render them unrecognizable:

For our purposes, then, the appropriate definition of adolescence must be broad enough to encompass not just the 14-year-old heavy metal fan but the 10-year-old Jewel “wannabe” and the 30-year-old graduate student reggae devotee as well. Indeed, of all social markers of adolescence, perhaps none is more diagnostic than a passion for popular music (p. 4).

Christensen and Roberts both contend that this social marker, namely “a passion for popular music”, might constitute as a stable condition in our overall culture, and not just one dichotomized into “youth” and “adult” categories. In his book *Music and Humanism*, R.A. Sharpe disagrees, claiming, “It is the stability of classical music that gives it its role in our culture, a role at present denied to jazz and rock, even though they declare the nature of modern culture more effectively” (vii). In light of Ruth Subotnik’s and Gunther Schuller’s indictments of contemporary “classical” music’s alienation of its audience, Sharpe’s assessment of the genre’s “stability” seem dubious. Yet, he and writers like Julian Johnson promote *all* art music, both old and new, as the standard of measure for all music. Johnson promulgates a conception that art music has a special “guarantee of quality” that accompanies it, due to the “special quality” that advanced age brings to the composer. To him, this does not occur in popular music:

Not only is classical music not oriented so exclusively; quite the opposite is usually the case. Most composers have to pass through a long period of unofficial apprenticeship before calling a work their “Opus 1,” and even child prodigies are generally more celebrated for their late works than their early ones. Composers’ late works, often written in old age, have a special quality, a depth and sophistication that exceeds the masterpieces of their earlier periods...classical music makes a quite different proposition: it is no less concerned with individuality, radical difference, and expansive energy, but it

does not restrict these qualities to the image of a merely physical youthfulness (p. 45).

Consider Johnson's earlier argument that a classical composer's "transgression", such as Schönberg, "are not the gestures of adolescence" but are "lifelong", and that later works by them display stability in aesthetics because they are not comprised of the "simple refusals" of youth. This conception of Schönberg, realizing his most "radical proposition" as "the mature artist", is certainly not supported by "Bernstein's Fifth". In Leonard Bernstein's fifth of six lectures at Harvard University, he takes a more ambivalent view on the so-called "permanency" of Schönberg's "transgressions":

There is a famous quote from Schoenberg in which he says, "A longing to return to the older style was always vigorous in me; and from time to time I had to yield to that urge." He then went on to say that was why he had written so much tonal music even late in life, and then dismissed the whole problem by saying that these stylistic differences, as he called them, aren't really very important. This, imagine, after having spent most of his life tearing the musical world apart by denying tonality (p. 287).

One can only wonder what Schönberg had in mind when uttering his last word before his wife and nurse on Friday, the thirteenth of July in 1951: "Harmony." This was a final numerological irony at death for, arguably, the composer who introduced the use of numeral manipulation, and its resulting atonality, as a matter of course for musical composition to the twentieth century. Bernstein frames the dodecaphonic irony another way, by suggesting that:

The rules of the twelve-tone method may be nonuniversal and even arbitrary enough to destroy the inherent tonal relationships among those twelve notes...with those twelve neither Schoenberg nor Berg nor Webern could ever escape the nostalgic yearning for the deep structures implied by, indeed inherent in, these notes. It's that "Alter Duft aus Märchenzeit," (*Old smell from the time of fairy-tales*) that nostalgic yearning quality that so often makes their music beautiful and moving (p. 289).

This nostalgic return to the youth of the mature Schönberg sounds ironically similar to the same justification Johnson gives in dismissing popular music:

Later in life, the music may be retained as a nostalgic memento of those years (as a particularly vivid form of memory), but otherwise its importance generally declines as one moves into adult life. So a large part of the discussion of popular music belongs to the sociology of youth rather than to a strictly musical inquiry (pp. 44-45).

The hypocrisy of this kind of exclusive discrimination, whereby inspiration from the music of one's youth has so often informed and inspired the "serious art" musician, is perplexing. Claude Debussy noted a "symphony is usually built on a melody heard by the composer as a child...I am more and more convinced that music is not, in essence, a thing which can be cast into a traditional and fixed form" (p. 1, *Essentials of Music*). Johnson would not agree with this, and sees no value in the music of youth:

Classical music, like art more generally, cannot be understood in the terms of popular culture. It is concerned with details of its musical language and inner musical form to a degree that popular music is not. Its value has little to do with fashion or the particular social rituals of any one stage of life. My point is not to oppose the two musics or to play one off against the other but to insist that classical music-as-art will never be understood in terms of the criteria applied to popular music. This should make us question the criteria's validity and the functions derived from popular music as universal yardsticks of musical value (pp. 46-47).

Writers and philosophers on music such as Johnson are numerous. Rather than wager that personal taste is something varied amongst us humans, these writers use technical language and historical precedent as reasons why *their music* is superior to someone else's. These writers are more reluctant to admit that classical music has benefited from popular music by advances in technology and recording techniques (Subotnik, p. 387). They are less hesitant to point out inspiration that art music has

given popular music. A vivid example is the piccolo trumpet used in the piece *Penny Lane* by the Beatles, written by Paul McCartney. In Mark Lewisohn's book *The Beatles Recording Sessions*, musician David Mason reports:

He (Paul) saw me playing Bach's Brandenburg Concerto Number 2 in F Major with the English Chamber Orchestra from Guildford Cathedral. The next morning I got a call and a few days later I went along to the studio. I took nine trumpets along and we tried various things, by a process of elimination settling on the B-flat piccolo trumpet (p. 93).

Mason recalled "there was no prepared notation" for him, yet he, McCartney, and producer and arranger George Martin were not impeded by this challenge. "Paul sang the parts he wanted, George Martin wrote them out, I tried them" (p. 93). It is generally accepted that popular music, being an adherent to the oral tradition, does not emphasize its composers to read or write their music using notation. This is considered, by its practitioners, not to pose a difficulty unless employing the playing of musicians from traditions predominantly relying upon notation. However, this general trend, that popular musicians cannot read or write "standard" musical notation, has been the basis for an extreme hesitancy in the inclusion of popular music into the "legitimate" music category. Theodore Gracyk, in *Rhythm and Noise: An Aesthetics of Rock*, discusses this very area of discrimination and crystallizes the perspective that Ruth Subotnik posits: that the score or "musical work" intends to perpetuate the tradition of "empiricists" and "positivists" at the exclusion of other musics not reliant upon this tradition (p. 31). Gracyk challenges Nelson Goodman's position, advanced in *Languages of Art*, that "any feature *not* amenable to notation (e.g. tempo specification) is not essential to the composition" (p. 32). The Beatles are a vivid example of this anomaly, for which numerous examples of both "scored-out"



parts and studio manipulations of musical materials were essential to the realizations of the compositions. *Strawberry Fields Forever*, *A Day in the Life* or *I Am the Walrus* are so firmly set into the popular music vernacular as “compositions,” yet, somehow, they still retain an innocence and directness generally attributed to “songs”.

The Beatles were a phenomenon unto themselves. I personally learned an enormous amount about music simply by attempting to trace many of their acknowledged “other music” influences, be it Bach through *Penny Lane* or composer Karlheinz Stockhausen, pictured on the *Sgt. Peppers Lonely Hearts Club Band* album cover. They are an example of the possibilities of one art “informing” another art, to mutually beneficial ends.

Another supporter of the Beatles, albeit early Beatles, is writer Roger Scruton. Born in 1944, this would make Scruton 18 or 19 when “She Loves You” came out. Taken from *The Aesthetics of Music* in the section titled optimistically “The Decline of the Musical Culture”, witness Scruton’s insistence that this popular song, one surmises that the Beatles was *the* popular music of his youth, has validity when that of more recent generations does not:

The long tradition of musical utterance, which enabled our parents to hum with equal facility an aria by Mozart or a melody of Nat King Cole, was a precious icon of humanity. You can still hear it in the Beatles or Buddy Holly, and to sing or move to this music is to take one step across the divide between popular and classic culture. You are beginning to think and feel *musically* – with an awareness of the voice not as a sound only, but as an expression of the soul. Compare the breathless gestures of Nirvana with the melody in... ‘She loves you’, by the Beatles – in which the music moves effortlessly through the harmonic field of G major, with phrases that answer and develop their predecessors, and which open the implied harmony at every juncture on to vistas of neighbouring keys – B minor, E minor, C minor, and D (p. 501).

While attempting to hide his feelings of nostalgia in justifying the Beatles by its “legitimatization” through notation, “the art object” cult is invoked again.

Scruton’s idiosyncratic perspective towards the music of his own youth, while being defamatory towards others’ musical choices, is a glaring example of what Senyshyn refers to as the “tyranny” inherent in music education:

This active form of elitism which discriminates against popular music and can be traced back to at least 2500 years ago in western culture, is motivated by a belief in the superiority of one’s own musical tastes, an intolerance of other people’s predilection for popular music and an ignorance of its historical evolution. Ultimately the active suppression of popular music is a form of tyranny which victimizes its adherents and practitioners into a position of inferiority and helplessness. Patronizing it without an authentic understanding of its potential in music education can be just as damaging to its followers as the active suppression of it (p. 1).

R.A. Sharpe, in his critique of Scruton’s book entitled *Critical Notice: Roger Scruton, The Aesthetics of Music*, cautions readers from taking Scruton too seriously when considering contemporary popular music:

Nevertheless, unless one has been able to listen more widely than Scruton apparently has done, or at least get some advice from people who do regularly listen to popular music, it is very risky to generalize. He bewails in his most fogeyish vein that they don’t write the stuff like Rogers and Hammerstein, Gershwin, Glenn Miller or the Beatles any more (with the exception, unbelievably, of Lloyd Webber) (p. 181).

Sharpe then launches into criticism of personal taste in the popular music for which Scruton expresses respect:

I wonder if he has had a good look at Rogers and Hammerstein recently. I did, for the purpose of this review, much as Britten used to listen to Brahms once a year just to make sure it was as bad as he thought it was. Well, Rogers and Hammerstein is even worse than I remembered. To bracket Glenn Miller and this talentless duo with Gershwin or Ella Fitzgerald or Ellington is absurd (p. 181).

Leonard Bernstein would likely have something to say about Sharpe's high regard for George Gershwin. In his cynically invented dialogue between himself, L.B. and P.M., "a Professional Manager, that unlucky soul whose job it is to see that the music published by his firm actually gets played" (p.52), Bernstein's tastes and distastes are made manifest:

**L.B.:** Gershwin was a songwriter who grew into a serious composer. I am a serious composer trying to be a songwriter. His was by far the more normal way: starting with small forms and blossoming out from there. My way is more confused: I wrote a symphony before I ever wrote a popular song. How do you expect me to have that simple touch that he had?

**P.M.:** ...If you had met him you would have known that George was every inch a serious composer. Why, look at the *Rhapsody in Blue*, the *American in-*

**L.B.:** Now, P.M., you know as well as I do that the *Rhapsody* is not a composition at all. It's a string of separate paragraphs stuck together – with a thin paste of flour and water. Composing is a very different thing from writing tunes, after all. I find that the themes, or tunes, or whatever you want to call them, in the *Rhapsody* are terrific – inspired, God-given. At least four of them, which is a lot for a twelve-minute piece...But you can't just put four tunes together, God-given though they may be, and call them a composition. Composition means a putting together, yes, but putting together of elements so that they add up to an organic whole. *Compono, componere-*

**P.M.:** Spare us the Latin. You can't mean that the *Rhapsody in Blue* is not an organic work! Why, in its every bar it breathes the same thing, throughout all its variety and all its change of mood and tempo...

**L.B.:** - the Chaikovsky (sic) sequences, the Debussy meanderings, the Lisztian piano fireworks...the minute a little thing called development is called for...Chaikovsky and his friends march through the door. And the trouble is that composition *lives* in its development (pp.52-53).

The dialogue, in its entirety, fixes itself firmly upon the issue of what is considered to be "legitimate" art music and what is not. Bernstein continues this dialogue, or "Imaginary Conversation", as he calls it, as a stylistically divergent medium to writing directly, in a rather defamatory and condescending way, as

Bernstein did later in his preface to Charles Schwartz's book on George Gershwin (*On Gershwin*, pp. 307-309). Bernstein's taste in music and, specifically, what qualifies as a *composition vérité*, discounts Gershwin from being taken seriously as a composer. Despite his apparent disagreement with Scruton in *what* popular music is truly good, Sharpe agrees with him on one important, albeit elitist, point:

Since Scruton elsewhere rightly insists that the education of taste has to be a duty, he must allow the possibility of somebody seeing that he lacks insight into a particular work or composer (p. 498).

It appears that Sharpe does not care to distinguish between “lacking insight” and allowing individual responses to music. One can only imagine listening to students in one of my music classes, giving heartfelt descriptions of songs that they love, only to interrupt them by reminding them of my duty to educate their taste. Sharpe uncomfortably straddles the line between tolerance and intolerance of individual taste. Interestingly enough, the opening lines in the preface to his book *Music and Humanism*, published the following year, Sharpe questions this same matter of taste in music:

If music is for you, as it is for me, a serious passion, then from time to time you will probably have been confronted with this problem: How do you distinguish between what is alien to your taste and what is not? Furthermore, how do you tell what music merely demands extra time and hard work in order to appreciate it and what music is not worth the effort, either because it is music which is technically competent but dead, or because it is music which is good but which will never appeal to you? I have also been exercised, as any lover of the arts ought to be, by the dictatorial nature of my own taste (p. v).

This “dictatorial nature” is at the heart of what Senyshyn referred to as the “active form of elitism which discriminates against popular music...motivated by a belief in the superiority of one's own musical tastes” (p. 1). In the first narrative taken from his article *Popular Music and the Intolerant Classroom*, Senyshyn relates his

experience teaching vocal music in an Ontario secondary school while confronted with the “duty to educate taste”:

I couldn't understand why my students didn't want to 'do' Monteverdi or a 'simple' arrangement of Mozart's "*Ave Verum*." Of course I didn't listen to their complaints. They had been trying to tell me that none of their teachers in the past taught them the music they wanted to learn and perform. I wouldn't tolerate such talk because in my arrogance and conceit I was convinced that I knew better; I was the classical musician, the expert and all they had to do was trust *my* musical taste. But it became more and more obvious that I too would fail and 'bite the dust' as so many others had done before me (p. 2).

Claude Debussy, in his article *Taste*, published in the journal *Société Internationale de Musique*, has some vital advice for Western music's frequent self-assertion that it is the only music of worth. Writing a few years before his death, Debussy states the following:

In these times, when we are so preoccupied with trying out various different ways of educating people, we are gradually losing our sense of the mysterious. The true meaning of the word “taste” is also bound to be lost. In the last century, having “taste” was merely a convenient way of defending one's opinions (p. 277).

Relating to popular music, bear witness to the following exercise in duty to educate taste by Allen Bloom in *The Closing of the American Mind*:

Rock music is as unquestioned and unproblematic as the air students breathe, and very few have any acquaintance at all with classical music. This is a constant surprise to me. And one of the strange aspects of my relations with good students I come to know well is that I frequently introduce them to Mozart. This is a pleasure for me, inasmuch as it is always pleasant to give people gifts that please them. It is interesting to see whether and in what ways their studies are complimented by such music. But this is something utterly new to me as a teacher; formerly my students usually knew much more classical music than I did (p. 69).

Bloom's lack of hesitancy to “lead the blind from the darkness” sounds positive, despite the tendency of some academic subjects to value the uses that classical music may have for furthering their own areas of interest. Bloom appears to

have a predisposition towards Mozart having benefits to school success, rather than “mere” pleasurable ones. Too often, the development of those interests takes precedent over the music itself. The following interview, taken from Patricia Campbell’s book *Songs in Their Heads: Music and Its Meaning in Children’s Lives*, is a vivid example of this “other use” for music in schools. Speaking is an Indian child named Ramnad, age “six and three-quarters,” and living in England:

You know Mozart? That makes you work better...If you put on Mozart while you’re working, it makes you smarter and faster. And one time, when a teacher played Mozart for students in college, they became smarter...My teacher told me that. My mom knows this, too...If I was listening to Mozart, I would not be jumping around or dancing. I would be working. Maybe I’d be writing, or doing math. I might be writing words, but not necessarily having to do with Mozart. It’s just that Mozart would help me do better. Can I tell you one thing about India? But you know what? Indian music is not the same as Mozart music, even though they play violins in India. I don’t feel like working when I hear Indian music...I feel like playing, or singing, or sometimes – you might think this is weird – praying. We sing and play at our weekly visits to the temple each week (pp. 98-99).

In the book, Campbell makes some important observations about “musical myths” involving classical music and its purported effects upon intellectual development:

Remarkably, some researchlike reports in education and the arts seep into the popular media stream of newspapers, magazines, and TV features. Ram (Ramnad) has picked up what his teacher has learned about the supposed power of Mozart’s music to increase students’ concentration level and thus to raise their scores on standardized intelligence tests. This is stunning information, particularly in its converted form as a type of oral lore that is passed to children at home and in school. In fact, the reinterpretation of the findings of Frances Rauscher and her colleagues (1994) on music’s impact on the improvement of spatial reasoning skills many times over has produced a myth regarded as “immutable truth,” one that has been widely embraced by musicians and made known to the public at large (p. 99).

One need only look at the glut of children’s audio compact discs, readily obtainable in the marketplace, to recognize that popular music isn’t the only musical

genre with crass marketability in mind. In the case of the infamous “Mozart Effect” series, the age of the consumer ranges even lower than popular music marketers could stoop: the unborn. Here is a short list of current examples, culled from *Amazon.com*:

- The Mozart Effect: Music For Moms and Moms-To-Be*
- Ultra-sound: Music for the Unborn Child (including “Mozart’s proven-to-make-- you-smart Sonata for Two Pianos featuring André Previn.”)*
- The Mozart Effect: Music for Newborns – A Bright Beginning*
- Mozart for Mommies and Daddies – Jumpstart Your Newborn’s IQ*
- Build Your Babies Brain With Mozart*
- The Mozart Effect – Music for Babies – Playtime to Sleepytime*
- The Mozart Effect: Music For Babies: Nighty Night*
- The Mozart Effect Music for Children, Volume 1: Tune Up Your Mind*
- The Mozart Effect Music for Children, Volume 2: Relax, Daydream, & Draw*
- Mozart In Motion: The Mozart Effect: Music for Little Ones*
- Mozart’s Magnificent Voyage: Tales Of The Dream Children*

It seems that there is no limit to the “effect” this Mozart has upon us, whether an expecting mother, a current mother, an unborn or newly born child, or a waking, a drowsy or a sleeping child. Mozart all the time, just to be certain, must surely be the zealous charge of all responsible parents and educators. Campbell, rightly so, is not so convinced:

Unfortunately, the research from which this modern American musical myth has arisen is taken from a single observation of a relatively small number of students: one setting, one sample, one analysis. The dangers of inference of this result (that Mozart makes you smarter) to a larger and more general population should not be taken lightly, as even a second setting or observation of the same population could possibly produce different results. In larger terms, opposing results could immediately deflate and even adversely affect the myth on which so many musicians are currently riding. While educators typically cling to research that appears supportive of their work (recall the excitement, ca. 1980, regarding the right – brain/ left – brain dichotomy) a cautious review of the circumstances of the research should precede its acceptance (pp. 99-100).

The following is a quotation used year after year in my own school’s

newsletter to justify enrolling students in band and choir. Numbers of students enrolling in both band and choir drop significantly each year, despite the “hard facts” suggested in the following statement:

"Research shows that when a child listens to classical music the right hemisphere of the brain is activated, but when a child studies a musical instrument both left and right hemispheres of the brain *light up*. Significantly, the areas that become activated are the same areas that are involved in analytical and mathematical thinking."- Dee Dickinson, *Music and the Mind*. (Seattle: New Horizons for Learning, 1993).

The “research shows” phenomenon is infamous in education circles for rearing its head during staff meetings and in professional development sessions for teachers, especially, for some reason, when it comes to brain research. The insidiousness in using these kinds of statements to justify “studying” music is that, foremost, it deprives music of its ineffable nature. I do not believe for a moment that most music teachers care to “shoot themselves in the foot”, so to speak, by taking away the power that music *itself* holds, in deference to the potential it may have in other areas, believed more tangible, perhaps, in the students’ lives.

However, it is hardly prudent to rest one’s musical security upon Rauscher’s two-part study when, in the first part of the study, 10 minutes of Mozart’s Sonata for Two Pianos in D Major, K. 448 came up against 10 minutes of an unnamed Philip Glass “minimalist, repetitive” piece, 10 minutes of a title-less, audio-taped spoken story and 10 minutes of an audio-tape of another nameless example referred to as “repetitive...British-style dance (trance) music.” Given the strictures of controlling “variables” in “controlled experiments”, the only variable described fully enough to repeat this “experiment” is the Mozart piece. Not surprisingly, the gains by Rauscher and her study appear to be more than, merely, a renewed appreciation for Mozart’s



piano sonatas. On the final page of the study, following the bibliography, the following expression of gratitude is given:

Acknowledgments: These studies were supported by the National Association of Music Merchants, The Gerard Foundation, Walter Cruttenden and Associates, the National Piano Foundation, the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences and an equipment donation from the Yamaha Corporation of America (p. 12).

Despite numerous writings and “scientific studies” with the objective grasp some claim to have in “understanding” music, the matter of *personal* taste inevitably returns to this discussion. Why does someone wish to prove that Mozart makes us smarter and not Bach or the Beatles? How can one objectify such a thing as personal taste? The knowledge that we share likes and dislikes with other humans could only be beneficial to better understand our existence. There are, however, those who claim that our personal tastes in music conspire to form a collective representative of a degenerative society. Allan Bloom, liberal arts teacher, translator of *The Republic* and, not surprisingly, staunch advocate of his own brand of Platonic ideals in education, refers to Plato’s *Republic* as, “*the* book on education, because it really explains to me what I experience as a man and a teacher, and I have almost always used it to point out what we should not hope for, as a teaching of moderation and resignation (p. 381).

Roger Scruton took Bloom’s spirit to heart in his indictment of popular music and culture to be found in the final chapter of *The Aesthetics of Music*. Since good taste in popular music is deemed an objective ability by Scruton, his willingness to pass judgement upon the tasteless majority holds no bounds:

...it is fitting to consider popular music, and the quite peculiar condition into which music has been put, by the seeming disappearance of taste.

Plato...wished to ban certain kinds of music from his Republic – particularly those associated with the wild dances of the corybants. In Plato's view, abandoned movement bespeaks an abandoned soul, and the 'care of the soul' is the first task of politics. Aristotle was not so keen on banning things.

Nevertheless, he too believed that music has character and that when singing or dancing we imitate this character and make it our own. Few matters are more important to the educator than the music which his pupils sing or dance to. In this, the Greeks thought, as in every habit, we must separate virtue from vice, which means distinguishing music that fulfils our nature, from music which destroys it. Not many people would now endorse those ancient attitudes. Perhaps only Allan Bloom...has been willing to stand beside Plato, in dismissing the Dionysian pop music of our times as the enemy of moral order (p. 496).

Scruton's admonition of Dionysus and anything remotely to do with gaining sensuous pleasure from music or life, for that matter, brings to mind a parallel with the treatment of Dionysian and Apollonian perspectives in the film *Zorba the Greek*. According to an entry in *Magill's Survey of Cinema*, the following synopsis of the film appears, describing the disastrous sluice scene towards the end of the movie:

...With the project a complete loss, Basil's monies are totally lost; his response is to ask that Zorba teach him to dance on the beach of Crete. It is the most hilarious scene in this film in which humor constantly vies with seriousness. Basil's simple request testifies to a major expansion of his attitude, one inviting closer inspection since attitude and change are the main philosophical concerns of the novel as well as the film. The attitudes toward life embodied by Basil and Zorba were spawned from the ancient Greeks and enshrined in their religious belief in the gods Dionysus and Apollo. Dionysus was impetuous and passionate, unreflective and irrational; his passions were expressed in the strong emotional arts such as music and dance. There is little doubt that Zorba's spirit is aligned with that of Dionysus. Basil, on the other hand, represents Apollo. Rational and reflective, passive and restrained, the Apollonian worldview is expressed in literature and sculpture, in the contemplative arts rather than the active ones. Apollo checked the emotions, Dionysus offered them free reign. Although possessing opposite orientations in the world, Zorba and Basil are for a brief time coupled in harmony. Thus, when Zorba's sluice collapses, Basil opts for the Dionysian remedy of dance (p. 213).

It is certainly not an anomaly of rock music to be associated with the Dionysian or the “sensuous”. Søren Kierkegaard, in *Either/Or*, referred to Mozart’s *Don Giovanni* as a “symbolic expression of the erotic” and said:

Faust represents the demonic intellectually, which thought must unfold; and so Faust has received frequent dialectical treatment. Don Juan represents the demonic sensuously, which music alone can unfold (p. 201).

Similarly in 1904, Claude Debussy wrote, "The primary aim of French music is to give pleasure". This was a time when the magnetic pull of the Wagnerian aesthetic began to weaken many an artist or thinker, not least Friedrich Nietzsche. Previously, Nietzsche greatly admired Richard Wagner, dedicating his first book *The Birth of Tragedy* to him. The following writing is an example of the high esteem that Nietzsche previously held for Wagner’s music and aesthetic:

I ask the question of these genuine musicians: whether they can imagine a man capable of hearing the third act of *Tristan and Isolde* without expiring by a spasmodic distension of all the wings of the soul? A man who has thus, so to speak, put his ear to the heart chamber of the cosmic will, who feels the furious desire for existence issuing therefrom as a thundering stream or most gently dispersed brook, into all the veins of the world, would he not collapse all at once? Could he endure, in the wretched fragile tenement of the human individual, to hear the re-echo of countless cries of joy and sorrow from the “vast void of cosmic night” without flying irresistibly toward his primitive home at the sound of this pastoral dance-song of metaphysics? But if, nevertheless, such a work can be heard as a whole, without a renunciation of individual existence, if such a creation could be created without demolishing its creator—where are we to get the solution of the contradictions? (pp. 228 – 229).

Nietzsche continues to show admiration and a “taste” for Wagner. One notices, too, Nietzsche’s struggle with Dionysian and Apollonian ideologies as they relate to his emerging aesthetic:

Here there interpose between our highest musical excitement and the music in question the tragic myth and the tragic hero—in reality only as symbols of the most universal facts, of which *music alone* can speak directly. If, however, we

felt as purely Dionysian beings, myth as a symbol would stand by us absolutely ineffective and unnoticed, and would never for a moment prevent us from giving ear to the re-echo of the *universalia ante rem*. Here, however, the Apollonian power, with a view to the restoration of the well-nigh shattered individual, bursts forth with the healing balm of a blissful illusion: all of a sudden we imagine we see only Tristan, motionless with hushed voice saying to himself: “the old tune, why does it wake me?” (p. 229).

Nietzsche did later admit to having an awakening to “music of the senses”. In his declaration, *The Case of Wagner*, Nietzsche forsakes the aesthetic of his formerly beloved composer and vows a love for Georges Bizet. He claimed that “each time I heard *Carmen* it seemed to me that I was more of a philosopher, a better philosopher than at other times” (p. 231). Nietzsche asks, “Has any one ever observed that music emancipates the spirit? And that the more one becomes a musician the more one is also a Philosopher?” (p. 232). Nietzsche declares:

Bizet’s music seems to me perfect... “All that is good is easy, everything divine runs with light feet”: this is the first principle of my aesthetics. This music is wicked, refined, fatalistic: and withal remains popular – it possesses the refinement of a race, not an individual (p. 232).

Similarly, Claude Debussy, in his article *Taste*, declares:

Was it not the professionals who spoiled the civilized countries? And the accusation that the public likes only simple music (implying bad music) – is that somewhat misguided? The truth is that real music is never “difficult” (p. 279).

Allan Bloom, however, would agree that rock music is *bad music*, based upon the perceived ill effects the “music alone” has upon our youth. He would compare rock music to much of Nietzsche’s description of Bizet, namely that the music is “wicked, fatalistic, and popular”. Bloom greatly concerns himself with rock music, and advocates the censorship of it. *The Closing of the American Mind*, which, at one time, was an American number-one best seller, came on the heels of the U.S.

congressional hearings led by Tipper Gore, which aimed to censor popular music unless the music industry agreed to do it themselves. According to Theodore Gracyk, in *Rhythm and Noise: An Aesthetics of Rock*, Tipper Gore listened to Prince's song *Darling Nikki* and decided to proceed with the hearings. His intrusive move to invoke the legal system to "control" content of music is nothing new to Western civilization. In *The French Academies of the Sixteenth Century*, Jean-Antoine de Baïf and Joachin Thibault wrote:

It is of great importance to the morals of the citizens of a city that the music current and heard there should be governed by certain laws, since the souls of most men conform to and behave in accord with it (so that, where music is disordered morals are easily depraved, while where it is well ordered men are well chastened) (p. 320).

Allan Bloom cites strictly philosophical reasons why music has become what it is:

The triumphant Enlightenment rationalism thought that it had discovered other ways to deal with the irrational part of the soul, and that reason needed less support from it. Only in those great critics of enlightenment and rationalism, Rousseau and Nietzsche, does music return, and they were the most musical of philosophers. Both thought that the passions – and along with them their ministerial arts – had become thin under the rule of reason and that, therefore, man himself and what he sees in the world have become correspondingly thin. They wanted to cultivate the enthusiastic states of the soul and to re-experience the Corybantic possession deemed a pathology by Plato. Nietzsche, particularly, sought to tap again the irrational sources of vitality, to replenish our dried-up stream from barbaric forces, and thus encouraged the Dionysian and the music derivative from it (p. 73).

Bloom fully adopts the Platonic concept that the wrong kind of music will, step by step, kill our collective human souls. While claiming that "classical philosophy did not censor the singers. It persuaded them", Bloom condones immediate censorship, should "persuasion" not succeed:

A pubescent child whose body throbs with orgasmic rhythms; whose feelings are made articulate in hymns to the joys of onanism or the killing of parents; whose ambition is to win fame and wealth in imitating the drag queen who

makes the music. In short, life is made into a nonstop, commercially packaged masturbational fantasy (p. 75).

Bloom did not, however, believe that the root of rock music's depravity lay in the lyrics. The decadence came from the music itself:

Young people know that rock has the beat of sexual intercourse. That is why Ravel's *Bolero* is the one piece of classical music that is commonly known and liked by them. In alliance with some real art and a lot of pseudo-art, an enormous industry cultivates the taste for the orgiastic state of feeling connected with sex (pp. 73-74).

Theodore Gracyk summarizes Allan Bloom's position succinctly:

Bloom concludes that, as a cultural phenomenon, the current music industry is a greater threat than – but is otherwise similar to – drug trafficking. America's tolerance for this music will someday be seen to be the “greatest madness” of our age, akin to yesteryear's tolerance of racism and witch-burning. It seems that Tipper Gore should not have worried about Prince's lyrics; the threat was in that old devil rhythm (p. 128).

Thomas West, a fellow student of Allan Bloom's former teacher, Leo Strauss, is critical of Bloom's intolerant stance towards modernism in general. In his book *Essays on the Closing of the American Mind*, West states:

Like Bloom, I too have learned from Leo Strauss that there is a vital alternative to modern thought in classical political philosophy. No one taught his readers to loathe the ultimate degradation of modernity more effectively than Strauss. But there is a danger for Americans in particular in Strauss's teaching, a danger that Bloom succumbed to. Crudely understood, Strauss seems to be saying (for example, in the first chapter of *What Is Political Philosophy?*): Ancients are good, moderns are bad; America is modern; therefore America is bad. More specifically, according to Strauss, America is based on Locke, and Locke, exalting the individual above God and nature, exiles the individual from man's deepest longing, the longing for eternity (p. 18).

Throughout the history of Western music, few dichotomies have been as sharply pronounced than those of the “serious” and “popular” genres. Neo-Platonist writers, such as Allan Bloom, express despair for a “lost paradise”, similar to

previously cited sentiments by Jerrold Levinson and Gunther Schuller. In his book *Afterwords: Hellenism, Modernism, and the Myth of Decadence*, Louis Ruprecht notes this historical predisposition amongst intellectuals and artists to have their “own crucial myth of classical culture” (p. 238). Ruprecht, quoting William Arrowsmith’s *A Greek Theater of Ideas*, frames the debacle in the following way:

A tradition is, after all, like love; we “crystallize” it, endow it with the perfections it must have in order to justify our need and our love. And classical Greek culture has for some time stood in relation to modern culture as a measure of our fall from grace and innocence... To our modern dissonance, the Greeks play the role of old tonality, the abiding image of a great humanity. They are our lost power, lost wholeness, the pure *presence* and continuity of reality our culture has lost.

Against a need like this and a myth like this, argument may be futile. But we should not, I think, be allowed to mythologize unawares. If we first deprive classical culture of its true turbulence in order to make ourselves a myth of what we have lost, and then hedge that myth with false ritual, we are depriving ourselves of that community of interest and danger that makes the twentieth century true kin to the Greeks. We deprive ourselves, in short, of access to what the past can teach us in order to take only what we want (p. 238).

As discussed in Part I of this thesis, this “false ritual” has been applied to opera by means of “speech” and “arousal” theories. What might seem more obvious, the reference to “classical music” becomes cloudy, depending upon what period of music to which this “classical” paradigm is applied. These “rituals” have also surfaced in practices common to music appreciation such as Leonard Bernstein’s guide to “correctly” listen, using the Aristotelian concept of metaphor, “which most produces knowledge”. I argue that it is often due to these applications and misapplications of “classical” that have maintained convenient divisions in popular musics such as rock and jazz, as well as an intolerance of acceptance for the coexistence of music and drama in opera, itself an apparent “serious” form of music.

If Ruprecht is correct that we, throughout Western history, have carried our own “myth of classical culture”, then there may be no genuine meaning inherent in generalizations often given to denote “Greek thought”. Statements, which imply a “universal knowledge” of what constituted Hellenic culture, might simply be made, as William Arrowsmith warns, “in order to justify our need”. Indeed, in areas of artistic control and censorship, these are crucial distinctions to be made. In closing, Ruprecht invokes Friedrich Nietzsche, who questions our real knowledge, if indeed any exists, of Greek philosophy: “To *surpass* Greek culture through our own achievement – that is the task. But to do that, it must first be known!” (p. 239).



## Part IV: Negation Without Negotiation

**What is it that creates a community  
between a popular song  
and a musical work of art?  
That's a subject that I find fascinating.**  
*Gilles Deleuze*

**We agree, then, that music is nothing other than the perfected natural language; that its expression is independent of any kind of human convention; that this sublime and mysterious expression, like that of nature itself (whose accents it imitates) is engraved in living lines on all hearts; that embraces everything that arises from feeling; that it can only feebly be translated into words; that it extends beyond the limits of the imagination; and that it has not been given to us to be shut up within the narrow confines of thought. We agree, finally, that the language of music is the language of all living beings, whether rational or not.**  
*Guillaume-André Villoteau (1807)*

Villoteau's words, from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, could easily be uttered now in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, for such are the similarities of the dominant ideology for music and, consequently, music education in both centuries. The Age of Enlightenment, and the resulting paradigms of rationalism and scientific materialism that this age ushered in, has been a source of frustration for many generations of musicians who find the emphasis on scientific empiricism and the use of objective, descriptive language to be limiting and, ultimately, incompatible with musical experience. Present music educators, such as Thomas Regelski, propose a radical change to the manner in which music education is currently practiced, based upon an amended form of critical theory, which had its origins from exiles of totalitarianism at the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research. Regelski invokes critical theory to criticize Western "high" culture and classical music's dominance over others, such as world or popular musics. Popular music, in particular, has wide public and community support but, ironically,

these areas receive little, if any, support back from music education. Yet, those who would forcibly substitute the paradigm of popular music for the Western tradition in schools are dangerously close to becoming totalitarians themselves. Despite reasonable claims and rationales that the Western paradigm be significantly altered, the intrusive exchange of one ideology for another is fraught with paradox. The most reasonable attempt to reconcile these disparities comes from Estelle Jorgensen, who suggests that each side ultimately informs, and is informed, by the other. In the end, no one paradigm can stand by itself and examine its own flaws without the presence of the other.

The concept of “critical education” is a result of applications of the critical theorists from the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research. The participants in this group did not stake claim to being members, as such, but participated in intense critical review of social institutions and dominant groups in power. Thomas Regelski, in “*Critical Education, ” Culturism and Multiculturism*, gives a brief overview of the group’s concerns:

In its early wave, Theodor Adorno, Walter Benjamin and Max Horkheimer undertook a critical analysis of Western history beginning with the eighteenth century Enlightenment. Adorno and Horkheimer saw Enlightenment thinkers as having put into motion two incompatible tendencies, both the legacy of the seventeenth century "age of reason." On one hand was the rationalism of philosophical idealism stemming from Descartes; and on the other was the scientific materialism that arose from the empiricism of Francis Bacon and Galileo (p. 2).

Regelski further states that the critical theorists claim that the ideal of reason during the Enlightenment was “distorted by both Western positivism and Marxist scientism into the illusory, narrow and therefore humanly delimiting *technical rationality* that sees knowledge in terms of control” (p. 3). Referring to a 1937 essay

by Max Horkheimer entitled *Traditional and critical theory*, Regelski points out that Horkheimer distinguishes between “traditional” and “critical” theories by viewing the former as being:

...associated with the logical positivism that had evolved from Enlightenment empiricism and its false claims to objectivity. Traditional scientific theory, in this view, had become ideological in its claim that “facts” are detached from theory or other social and historical circumstances. Furthermore, when positivist theory is applied to society and individuals, the human condition is misrepresented as ahistorical, law-like and unresponsive to change. Even worse, these law-like regularities promote a technology of social engineering used by a powerful elite that dominates people at the bottom of the social hierarchy (p. 3).

Regelski asserts that traditional music education closely adheres to the positivist paradigm, using precisely the same methods derived from traditional science and, as a result, has inherited many of its perceived deleterious effects. In his article *Taking the “Art” of Music for Granted: A Critical Sociology of the Aesthetic Philosophy of Music*, Regelski claims the paradigm of “form” is a consequence of the Enlightenment’s “rational penchant for analyzing music into its supposed constituent elements”, such as “melody”, “harmony”, “rhythm”, “meter”, and “timbre” (p. 38). Regelski asserts that “instead of improving the postulated relevance to an *aesthetic* response, the analytic attitude toward appreciation of music often has the anaesthetic and opposite effect: music becomes inert (i.e., “inart” – Onions 1966, 472) when dissected and reduced to abstract atomistic elements” (p. 38).

Regelski advocates that practicing music educators, therefore, must “take a critical stance on the role and value of music in life and thus its reasonable place in schooling” (p. 2). However, Hildegard Froehlich proposes that this encouragement for “teachers in compulsory education to engage in action research and systematic

self-examination” also be applied to those in higher education, herself included, which she likens to a “secret society...more concerned with themselves and their own well-being than with those whom they claim to serve” (p. 1). In her article *Music Educators at the Tertiary Level: A Secret Society?*, Froelich suggests that, by using the same principles of critical theory, higher educators’ focus should be “self-examination rather than telling our colleagues in primary and secondary schools how to teach in environments largely unlike our own” (p. 1).

A case in point is Regelski’s 1986 article in the *Canadian Music Educator* entitled *Getting Into Action for Middle School Music*. One can see the distillation of his current vision of music education in this article but one also notices that Regelski still is familiar enough with the classroom to realize that much music education employs listening programs due, not to a lack of desire to have “praxis”, as he later advised in *Social Theory, and Music and Music Education as Praxis* (2004), but because he admitted, at that time, that “this is the most realistic possibility for the preponderance of the general public to be musically involved in real life” (p. 51). I suggest that Regelski was also, as a teacher, intimately aware of other “realistic possibilities” such as school budgets that may or may not be present to allow for instruments of “praxis”, not to mention the increasingly smaller amounts of time allowable for music in the “ever-burgeoning”, read shrinking, curriculum. In some situations, a listening program might be all that some music teachers could reasonably expect to afford, both in allocations of time and finances, in their schools.

Ironically, Regelski’s advocacy of passive listening programs, a component of his “*Action Learning*” program of the late 1980’s, appears philosophically

incompatible with his later conversion to viewing music, not as an object or source of knowledge, a concept he criticized in *Taking the "Art" of Music for Granted*, but from "a praxial view," which "considers *music in and as human action* (p. 44). Regelski's previously "resigned" position, that the listening to music for the general public is the most realistic hope in music education, is drastically different from the same writer who, in eight years time, quotes Robert Craft's statement that "passive listening" is "now increasing to what threatens to become the eventual exclusion of active amateur participation" (p. 44).

Using my own teacher training as an example, there was frequent advice given to student teachers by sponsor teachers and, occasionally, by school advisors, that we should not "re-invent the wheel." Most often, this meant using pre-existing lesson plans, based upon ideologies and practices that we did not have the time or the will to criticize. I admittedly used Regelski's supplemental "*Action Learning*" listening activities in my own early middle school teaching, accepting the same fatalistic attitude that Regelski had towards the "most realistic possibility for the preponderance of the general public to be musically involved in real life." His was the only available resource at the time that was directed towards a Canadian middle school environment. Although Regelski did amend this particular perspective towards listening activities dramatically over time, nonetheless, Froehlich's assertion that some higher educators prescriptions for teaching, like Regelski's middle school model, may not necessarily be reflective of the environments and students to which they purport.

Despite this criticism of past incongruities in the development of Regelski's thought, this example allows me to accept my own failures, knowing that I must strive to do what is best for my students and not, unquestioningly, maintain the institutionalized paradigm of which I am part. I have great sympathy and respect for Regelski's current mobilization of music educators to examine these paradigms and practices, which are, all too often, based upon "music as knowledge". Changing the system of music education, as it is typically delivered, is no small feat. Writing in *"Critical Education," Culturalism and Multiculturalism*, Regelski warns:

This poses a significant challenge for schools in general and for music teachers in particular. To begin with, the dominant cultural institution has been the Eurocentric Fine Art of 'high' musical Culture advanced by the "cultural patriarchy" (Abrahams 1986) of university schools of music and conservatories, and imitated in public schools by teachers trained by the patriarchy. It will certainly be necessary to protect and insure this important tradition; but this music cannot be allowed any longer to dominate education to the exclusion of other musical cultures studied and understood as rational exemplars of concretely shared experience, values and praxis (pp. 7-8).

A paradigmatic shift of this magnitude is certain to raise many a "high" eyebrow and send members of this "cultural patriarchy" clamoring to their defense. In *Ideology as Reflexive or Reflective?*, Regelski explains how Karl Marx asserted:

...that idealistic power was largely a matter of control exerted by the privileged "ruling classes" over the lower classes... However, unambiguous social and economic class distinctions...are notably difficult to discriminate in the modern world, and the exerting power and social influence are equally complex processes. For example, most classically trained musicians are not among the dominant economic class; nor does their favored music and its ideology dominate or dictate musical tastes and preferences. Yet the cultural authority of the conservatory or university ideology, with its instructional paradigms and paragons, its ideals and standards of "good music," and its orthodox aesthetic terms of discourse and value, is the dominant influence on music teachers and thus on formal music education in schools (p. 4).

Following this analysis based upon Marx, Regelski continues to assert the large role our accepted ideology, and its apparent reflection of our musical “taste,” plays in determining what music gets attention, in order to be taught:

Much of what music educators teach, then, reflects an ideology of high culture, good taste, and connoisseurship that, since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, created a musical hierarchy and thus an ever-widening cultural gap between “cultural authorities” and “the unwashed masses” (*viz.*, immigrants and working classes) they sought to convert to “true culture”...However, instead of accepting the sacralization of music that was both the cause and result of that ideology, ongoing sociocultural, socioeconomic and sociomusical forces and conditions led to the contrary results we see today in the proliferation and vitality of other musics, and the ensuing marginalizing of the classical canon (p.4).

Regelski observes a frequent hypocrisy exhibited in many a “cultured” taste:

Sociologists, thus, have documented that even “highbrows” are typically musical omnivores, and becoming more so. This expansion of musical taste (ideologues describing it instead as a corruption of taste), taste publics and practices has contributed, in turn, to the increasingly marginal status of music education - a crisis that has been countered mainly by advocacy conducted in terms of the ascendant ideology. Thus, rather than fatalistically acceding to the “classy” and other culturally elevated and noble sounding ideological claims made for an aesthetic hierarchy, most students - and the public in general - ‘vote’ to the contrary through their musical choices in daily life. And despite the hegemony in music education of this ideology, rather than becoming a living reality has instead become a liability (p. 5).

This “voting” for musical choices or tastes is also entered statistically in music sales. Despite the enormous amounts of “free downloading” on the Internet, popular music sales are still significantly higher than classical music. During his address to a MayDay Group Colloquium in Vancouver in 2003, entitled *Curriculum Reform for Music Education: An Outline Proposal*, Regelski announced:

Classical traditions, however, painstakingly treat Classical music as esoteric (i.e., inaccessible, thus requiring study and discrimination) and exclusive (i.e., of those failing to ‘make the grade’). In comparison, exoteric musics thrive everywhere in everyday life and are inclusive (self-chosen taste publics, etc.);

thus Classical music is (not surprisingly) marginal in society (e.g., requires government subsidy, accounts for only 2-3% of all CD sales, etc.) (p. 1).

It is difficult to understand why this paradigm is not more quickly amended, given the fact that money is coming from government subsidies to fund many orchestra programs and recording projects. The continuing support, despite overall decreasing enrollments and the overwhelming resulting discontinuation with playing “standard” band instruments or choral singing in the students’ communities, should be cause for concern. Also speaking in Vancouver on this subject to the MayDay Group was Patrick Jones, who expressed the following concerns in *Action for*

*Change: Acting on our Ideals:*

School based musical offerings tend to be disconnected from the students’ musical lives outside of school, and have failed to develop graduates who continue to perform music throughout their lives or become audience members for art music concerts. Instead, my observation has been that most students who perform in high school tend to put their instruments away upon graduation and continue to enjoy the music they listened to outside of school all along. My guess is they view their school music experiences as having been great activities, but not as having profoundly affected their musical choices in life (p. 1).

This sad acknowledgement, that typical music programs are anachronisms, is echoed by Keith Swanwick in *Music Education: Closed or Open?:*

Another way of creating a school music subculture is evident in North America and takes the form of the High School Band... Yet on graduating from school or leaving the band, a large proportion of students appear to put it all behind them. There appears little sign among adult communities of continued engagement with instrumental music. The same appears to be true for the choral programs. The main aim of these classes is often to get a program of music in shape for public performance, rather than provide a rich musical and educational experience. The teaching methods accordingly tend to be very directive, and there may be considerable repetition in rehearsal of a very small repertoire, often giving rise to boredom. The real musical interests of those students are likely to lie elsewhere (p. 129).



These outside interests are predominantly in the area of popular music. In the elementary, middle, and high schools, students identify with and closely follow their favourite bands, singers and instrumentalists with the zeal of a seasoned sports fanatic. According to the owners and managers of prominent music stores and music studios in Port Coquitlam, Port Moody, and Coquitlam, guitar sales and interest in the instrument, reflected by an ever-increasing enrollment of students for lessons, have never been greater. Yet, the language used in the traditional music community to categorize this instrument is under the heading of “recreational instrument”. Thomas Regelski, writing before his “conversion,” in *Getting Into Action for Middle School Music*, stated that “characteristic of Action Learning for General Music classes is performance on **social instruments** (recorder, guitar, electronic keyboards, etc.) to a recreational level” (p. 51). In his article *Schooling for Musical Praxis*, printed in the same publication thirteen years later, Regelski writes:

One especially vital and unfortunate consequence of the professionalizing and aestheticizing of music has been the relegation of folk and other ‘recreational’ instruments to the netherworld of the ‘official musical culture’ and thus of music education. To begin with, the very mention of ‘recreational’ instruments often will elicit a puzzled look or a derisive grin from musicians trained in the aesthetic canon. And if the mere mention fails to elicit disdain, any suggestion that such instruments and music ought to be officially nurtured and developed in schools or private lessons will almost certainly receive less than an enthusiastic welcome (p.35).

Despite the cool response this may get from someone trained in another musical tradition, it is folly to ignore the enthusiasm most youth exude for learning to play an instrument that directly relates to the music of their own choice, and more often than not, the music supported by their own parents and community. Almost every neighbourhood has a rock band in the basement or the garage, be it young or

old. What, if anything, are school music programs doing to promote this linking of the students' school with their community? What can be done about this? Patrick Jones would answer, "It's the music, stupid!" (p. 1). Perhaps more helpful is the vision he foresees in a 21<sup>st</sup> century music program:

A 21st Century music program must be designed to invigorate musical learning and to musically empower students by connecting them with their musical environment. The goal of this program is to graduate students who will continue performing and enjoying a wide range of musical offerings within their communities throughout their lives. In order to connect students' in-school music education with their out-of-school musical lives, music offerings emphasize music they will find in their communities. While instruction is divided into specialized courses of study, most courses incorporate performing, analyzing and creating music, thus helping students develop musical performance and decision-making skills. Instruction in all courses utilizes technology to assist students in composing, performing, recording, playing back and editing music of their own and of other composers (p. 1).

This area of technology is a particularly painful "thorn in the side" of many music educators. In my district, several particularly shortsighted music teachers approached the school board on "budget disclosure day", which is always a guaranteed event that will find local newspaper reporters in the room. Besides speaking on behalf of "all music teachers" in the district, which was simply not true, the teachers asked that schools do not purchase computers for music programs. These devices were construed as "anti-musical" and attempted to replace "performance programs" in the schools. Rather than welcome a technology that easily co-exists with performance, these traditionalists choose to shun technology from all music classes, in deference to their own "tastes" and "choices". This allows us to reapply Froelich's statement that many music educators are little more than a "secret

society...more concerned with themselves and their own well being than with those whom they claim to serve” (p. 1).

The possibilities inherent in using computer software for recording are endless. While uses in guitar classes and “rock school” programs seem more obvious in their applications of recording, even traditional band and choir programs could easily utilize this, without sacrificing their “performance based” status. It is quite possible that students would practice their respective parts even more diligently, given their opportunity to record them, because they would be able to focus, not only upon their own individual performance, but also upon the ensemble performance. In times of declining numbers in traditional music programs, it is perplexing that educators might strive to avoid a technology that, ultimately, might save the music one purports to value so highly above all others.

Peter Gouzouasis, reporting in *Fluency in general music and arts technologies: Is the future of music a garage band mentality?*, claims that computer music technologies are opening up new vistas in music composition and challenge traditional note-writing abilities to compose *and* perform music. Using the example of GarageBand or the “Movie of music software”, as it is sometimes referred to, Gouzouasis questions the efficacy of teaching traditional composition when there is a “more direct way” of doing it. According to Gouzouasis:

Notation will become...more exclusive...relegated to learning and teaching in conservatories, the music monasteries of the 21st century...With the tools we have today, all forms of music can be both related to and relative to what children and adolescents are able to compose on their own, without "music educational" direction...it seems that the only thing holding us back is the traditionalist mentality that has been prevalent in our profession for the past 100 years (p. 16).

I do not, however, agree with or support Gouzouasis in one condescending remark that “another challenge will be to move general music from the arcane practices of bonking on xylophones to making “real” music—music that children, adolescents, and adults can relate to, enjoy, and perform as a lifelong endeavor “(p. 14). This raises a serious concern and calls for a story in its connection to an issue raised earlier in this section of the paper, namely: the unfortunate reality of program funding and how teachers utilize what they have, or don’t have, in the absence of this.

Nine years ago, I entered a “converted” middle school, which means it was previously a junior high school, in a pre-existing building with no budget for instruments. The departing band teacher had taken all of the higher quality instruments with him to his new high school, which would eventually, unlike me, have a new facility-operating budget for instruments. As to the remaining instruments, this teacher had “given” them to our district fine arts coordinator, who was leaving his lofty position to teach in a new secondary school building with yet another new budget for instruments. Ironically, these are the same people who, to this day, complain that there is not enough “funding and quality below them” in elementary and middle school music programs. Therefore, in order to purchase a class set of mallet instruments, our saintly school counsellor and Simon Fraser graduate student of Fine Arts Education, suggested we stage “Cats”. In the course of two evening performances, we were finally able to raise the necessary funds to get instruments for our school.

Despite Gouzouasis’ dissenting comment, being a percussionist, I gladly participate in the “arcane practice” of “bonking” on xylophones or any other

percussion instruments, including the drum set. These are all instruments to which students, in my experience, have been able to “relate”. Having attended numerous Orff instrument workshops, I found a general dislike for the arrangements of little-known children songs or, even worse, banal compositions by educators trying to make some extra money off of their vocations. Instead of doing “Orff standards”, I began arranging current popular music for the wide range of these instruments at my disposal. I found, Gouzouasis aside, that transference of performing on a range of percussion instruments has continued to provide challenges for my students. Despite certain limitations inherent in any instrument, they easily demonstrate the subtleties and complexities in the components of popular song writing. Quite frankly, the vast majority of my students will tell you that there is nothing quite as liberating as physically *striking* something to get a sound from it. I often show films of Balinese and Indonesian gamelan orchestras, comprised of elders and children, performing in their communities. This is very much the ambience one can get with an assemblage of physical instruments, whether or not they can be “related to” as “lifelong.” Who is to say that the novelty of the sound-loops on GarageBand won’t wear thin over time?

Where Gouzouasis misleads us is in his simplistic application of GarageBand. The main potential that this “instrument” has, and even Gouzouasis uses quotation marks when using the word “play” in the article, are the recording studio “options” it contains. Among many other accessories available, there is a simple USB (Universal Serial Bus) interface available that allows the input of a quarter-inch guitar cable and an XLR microphone cable that can record *any* live source, not simply relying upon

pre-recorded loops that Gouzouasis insists will keep children and adults transfixed “for life.”

Proximal to this subject, the concept that an ideology, based upon generations of musical performance or “praxis”, can be summarily discarded is equally foolish. Technology should not be discussed using “either/or” scenarios any more than schools should *only* encourage traditional Western art music or *only* popular music. Ideologies do not wither and die because one wills it to be so. There are many sound reasons that they have persisted as long as they have.

A particular consequence of this attempt to dichotomize music is the discouragement of note reading as a kind of “bourgeois” activity for many music educators. Although time limitations in music programs often determine choices teachers make, regarding the primacy of “literacy” over performing, Estelle Jorgensen asserts that by including study of the Western tradition as “an organic and living thing”, we better understand “the particular contributions and detractions of Western Civilization” (p. 134). Unlike Thomas Regelski, Jorgensen views Western music as a continually transformative tradition, which has acquired many non-Western world-views and musical practices along its course of history. In her article *Western Classical Music and General Education*, Jorgensen defends inclusion of this tradition in education:

Musical notation is one of its singular achievements...Remaining illiterate in this tradition leaves one deprived of knowledge essential to full participation in a society that regards itself as Western. This deprivation, whether intentional or not, is racist and classist...failing to develop musical literacy in at least one notated musical tradition makes it difficult to break out of aural/oral into a literate one, something that exponents of aural/oral or little musical traditions may wish to do, sooner or later. And leaving students

limited is arguably mis-educative since it stunts and prevents their further development (p. 135).

Lucy Green cautions us “against throwing out the baby with the bath water”

(p. 2) in her article *Why ‘Ideology’ is Still Relevant for Critical Thinking in Music Education*. Green summarizes the dilemma accordingly:

With reference to music, it is necessary to understand ideology within the terms of the whole musical field, because specific categories of music are only manifest in contradistinction to others. Some of the main distinguishing forces in creating different categories of music involve ideological constructions of value. These constructions often contain the idea that valuable music is imbued with qualities such as universality, eternality, complexity, originality or autonomy. Whereas classical music readily lays claims to such qualities, popular, jazz and other ‘world’ musics do so less readily, and often only with qualification. But in all cases, the claims of value are ideological in so far as they involve reification and legitimation (p. 17).

In the article *Pax Americana and the World of Music Education*, Estelle Jorgensen argues that music educators, as “members of this tribe”, need to “give voice to those who are silenced, encourage those who are hopeless, and empower those who believe themselves powerless toward creating a more humane world” (pp 3-4). Jorgensen calls upon the common ideology, which she believes to be inherent in much of our art music, to provide this voice.

The Western classical tradition can epitomize this poly-vocality and provide opportunities to empower and give voice to musicians and their audiences. For example, it is not unusual for a piece by a German composer, for example, Brahms, to be played by a Japanese artist in the United States, Israel, India, or Australia... And their audiences are likely representative of many nationalities and ethnicities. Such is the power of this cosmopolitanism and collaborations that Daniel Barenboim and Edward Said discuss the possibilities of beginning to forge peaceful solutions to intractable political problems through musical collaborations even within this tradition, for example, as when Arab and Israeli musicians came together to perform at Weimar in 1999 (p. 4).

The Frankfurt critical theorists, a group of fiercely disparate thinkers, were formed during a time of totalitarianism, yet they had but one mind: to “abolish social

injustice” (Bonner, p. 201). Therefore, it is ironic that an attempt to radically amend the established paradigm of Western music should have totalitarian overtones, especially in light of Jorgensen’s appeal that the Western classical tradition act as a mediator in the world’s human rights struggles. Writing again in *Pax Americana*, Jorgensen does not wish to supplant one dogmatic paradigm with another. By applying critical theory, or “critical appraisal”, to all areas of music education, Jorgensen suggests that *any* assumption can be examined before making it a belief and putting it into practice:

Teaching the young to think in a particular music necessitates a critical appraisal of this tradition and its beliefs and practices. By critical appraisal, I refer to its strong sense in analyzing and de-constructing taken-for-granted assumptions and making careful judgments of the value of particular beliefs and practices. One cannot engage in an educational enterprise of any sort without values that are normative in a particular tradition (p. 11).

Jorgensen suggests the following way out of the popular and classical music maze by offering a *pax* of her own:

Not enough has been said in music education about the value of musics that have sophisticated intellectual traditions in helping develop the intellectual qualities desired. For example, classical traditions are of especial interest in music because they exemplify the sorts of intellectual prowess that educators need to develop in the young. They represent sophisticated attempts to create musics that surpass the ordinary. Such traditions have often emerged out of folk and popular musics, for example, rock and jazz may come to be thought of classically, even as a part of the Western classical tradition. People need to see examples of imaginative intelligence at work musically as in other ways (p. 11).

Returning to the words of Guillaume Villoteau, which introduced this part of the thesis, if music “is engraved in living lines on all hearts” and “has not been given to us to be shut up within the narrow confines of thought,” then the coexistence of the Western and non-Western paradigms might proceed, lest we negate the possibilities



for experience of those who may be moved by the musics of either one or both. In the paper's final section, the concept of the "little return" or "the ritornelle" will reappear, only to disappear again. The individual ritornello has no allegiance to any paradigm. It lies within and waits for its own time to be heard.

## Part V: A Little Return

**The man that hath no music in himself...let no such man be trusted.**  
*Portia in Shakespeare's "The Merchant of Venice"*

**Last night, in the silence that pervaded the darkness,  
I stood alone and heard the voice of the singer of eternal melodies.  
When I went to sleep, I closed my eyes with this last thought in mind,  
that even when I remain unconscious in slumber  
the dance of life will still go on in the hushed arena of my sleeping body,  
keeping step with the stars.**  
Rabindranath Tagore

**I always have a song in my head at night when I'm trying to get to sleep.**  
Anonymous Middle School Student

The Western music tradition, as claimed by Peter Kivy, does not properly “humanize” its citizens through music education. This leads to a disregard for a community’s own “tribal rituals”, enacted through the music immediate to the lives of its populace. Yet, according to Keith Swanwick, any institutionalized music “program” is ultimately incapable of supporting the community in its present state, due to an inability to respect either a music or the individual. John Eisenberg and Ivan Illich contend that schools, and their “hidden curriculum”, teach the importance of power status over quality of thought or humanistic values. This focus upon power can breed intolerance for less visible musics, in the face of the overwhelming dominance of popular music in general society. The future is grim for music education, should these assessments be accurate. Yet, the music of the individual appears to remain intact, despite the ill effects of the educational institution. Gilles Deleuze, and his concept of the “ritournelle” or personal refrain, brings some comfort that the music of meaning to each of us, will endure, unchanged and always our own.

Peter Kivy, in his essay "*Music and the Liberal Education*", questions the trend in education to "include musical and social events beyond the confines of a particular family, clan, or tribe, even to other parts of the world" (p. 91). Kivy argues that inclusion of other music, whether it be culturally or stylistically divergent from the students' own, might develop a lack of "regard for their own tribal rituals" (p.91).

In response to Kivy, in her essay *Justifying Music in General Education: Belief in Search of Reason*, Estelle Jorgensen alleges that, should music educators teach or enhance the understanding of music already part of students lives, they may "pander to students' present musical interests and desires rather than introduce new musical pieces...and enrich their understanding of their own and other's musics" (p. 7). However, Kivy might argue that music educators ultimately believe they are "humanizing" through musical experiences of the students' *immediate* culture or community. These experiences, in turn, are thought to initiate students into a sense of their social and cultural identity, and they are "humanized" through the emotional, cognitive, and physical impact of music (p. 82). This might be supported by the many young people, coming from other cultures and traditions, that wish to find their place in the musical culture of "the new world". Returning to Patricia Campbell's *Songs in Their Heads*, and the Indian boy, Ramnad, living in England, he states, "I like them (sitars) in India, but I'd rather hear guitars here" (p. 98).

In spite of Jorgensen's defence of "the Western tradition" in this paper's previous section, Kivy comes to the "distressing conclusion that there is no real rational justification for requiring students of the humanities to be familiar with such masterworks of the Western musical tradition as Beethoven's Third Symphony"

(p.84). Although Patrick Jones and Keith Swanwick both have previously asserted that the musical activities in students' communities do not generally reflect a support for the Western musical tradition and declare that both students and community would greatly benefit from a resulting symbiosis, of sorts, Swanwick has serious doubts about the capability of institutionalized music education to have any significance.

As discussed in the previous section of this paper, Swanwick is rightly sceptical of large, school instrumental and choral programs, which encourage repetition and technique, often for the sole purpose of public performance and adjudicated "festivals", aimed at "winning" or getting "high marks" from the adjudicators. With support from the writings of Charles Leonard, Robert House, Craig Kirchoff and Bennett Reimer, Swanwick insists that these practices are done at the expense of the students' individual musical and educational understanding. Referring to the study *Talented Teenagers: The Roots of Success and Failure* by Csikszentmihalyi, Rathunde and Whalen, it seems that student self-worth is also seriously compromised in competitive, performance-based programs:

From the point of view of competition, music as practiced in high school does not lag far behind (*math and science*). After one of the students in our sample was selected for the 19<sup>th</sup> flute chair in the statewide orchestra, whereas her friend was given the 12<sup>th</sup> chair, she said, "That was like a bullet through my head." In some schools, orchestra positions are reassigned every week, keeping up a relentless pressure on young instrumentalists. Music...resembles science in that, before becoming expressive, the performance must conform to the strict impersonal standards of the domain (pp. 105-106).

However, these concessions to personally meaningful and healthy musical experiences do not only occur in institutionalized band and choir programs, but also

when educators implement popular and world musics in the school system. Writing in

*Music Education: Closed or Open?*, Swanwick claims:

...in an attempt to recognize the reality of this music “out there,” certain elements of popular music have indeed entered the formal education scene. But in order to make itself respectable and to become appropriately institutionalized, popular music has to be modified, abstracted, and analyzed to fit into classrooms, timetables, and the aims of music education. The volume (and impact) is reduced, dancing is out, and the cultural context is shorn away. During this process it often becomes what (Malcolm) Ross would call “pseudo music” (p. 129).

This is an important criticism that many teachers of popular music often fail to recognize in themselves. In addition to this, the “public performance” component that hovers over “justifying” both band and choir programs, remains present for the vast majority of popular and world musics that are “institutionalized”. Kivy’s assertion that students might find a “regard for their own tribal rituals” through this music “out there”, as Swanwick refers to it, may simply remain as words without substance. If our collective belief in the dominant culture is so blind that it allows for transformations of a most superficial and banal kind, then we are simply the victims of our own institutionalization.

This can lead one to the sobering conclusion that there is no “music program” that can respect either a music or an individual. The institution assures that this will be so. In *The Limits of Reason*, John Eisenberg discusses the nature of this institutionalization. Making reference to Ivan Illich’s article *The Alternative to Schooling*, Eisenberg asserts that educational institutions, no matter where or what kind they are, teach “that learning *about* the world is more valuable than learning *from* the world” (p. 38). Eisenberg continues:

Essentially, what schools teach is that power status is more important than quality of thought or value of beliefs, that knowledge is a commodity that can be quantified and packaged and that the worth of individuals can be determined by the quantity of the officially sanctioned knowledge they possess. No room is left for individuality, rebelliousness, creative reconceptualization, or imaginative activity. The values implicit in these views are incompatible with such genuine humanistic values as the dignity, autonomy and worth of all persons. Therefore the very structure of the school precludes the possibility of genuine moral education in schools (p. 39).

Applying this to music in the institution, music educators who only promote popular music programs may really be teaching the “hidden curriculum” that Illich also speaks of, by asserting the values of the more populous, hence, powerful dominant culture. How this might lead to anything other than intolerance for other, less socially visible music traditions, is questionable.

If the school institution as a whole has no *real* capacity or desire to value individuality, then where does that leave music education? Sadly, it seems likely that the timetabled regimentation of any music runs counter to an individual’s musical identity. Instead, it appears more likely that this will take place in environments where individual *choice* and *time* for development is possible. No matter what language the school institution might use in “mission statements” or “school goals”, ultimately, it is genuinely incapable of giving sustenance to individual difference.

This is a great paradox, among many, which stands before music education, claiming that the institution, in order to be valid, must support the music in the student’s immediate community, yet the institution is itself incapable of supporting the individual student. Despite this unpleasant prognosis, educators continue in their attempts to “individualize” music classes. In his article *From the Bottom Up*, Daniel Cavicchi questions established “performance based” and “genre specific” music

programs. Rather than seeing themselves as active players of music, Cavicchi believes most students are active, not passive, listeners of their own particular “music of meaning” in their day-to-day lives. He suggests that educators can allow for such individual differences by turning music into a community and student-specific listening report:

Thinking about music in everyday life resituates the typical relationship between students and the curriculum. Wouldn't it be great if teachers could radically and directly address music as it is practiced in students' daily lives? I'd love to see classes where students keep journals of their musical experiences during the day, examine their own feelings while hearing, think about identity, measure their bodily states, map their social interactions around music, and then compare assumptions and conclusions...I'd love to see classes spend three to four months creating a detailed ethnography of music in their hometown...I would urge teachers to at least try to loosen their focus on genres and performance and introduce reflexive thinking about practices and behavior...With that small shift in emphasis, music class will no longer be known as only for the “talented” or “inclined” but as something for everyone; it will no longer dictate to students what music is supposed to be but rather ask them to explore what it might do for different people. The democratic participation and knowledge generated by this approach might be more lasting and effective in teaching students about the power of music than all a given school's performance ensembles combined (p. 13).

Besides overestimating the amount of time most music teachers are given in general classroom music, Cavicchi also assumes all musical disclosure to be a voluntary and public act. Written journals, “measurements” of arousal states, and “maps” of interactions are all examples of the same kinds of positivist, formalist reification of music that he criticizes throughout the article. The ineffable in music just might prove to be a difficult area to evaluate, prior to sending the obligatory report cards home.

In the essay *Does Everyone Have a Musical Identity?*, a more tempered, phenomenological approach is taken by its author. In his response to Raymond

MacDonald and David Hargreaves' book *Musical Identities*, Theodore Gracyk suggests that adolescents and young adults might conceivably have a musical identity as a "non-musician" or as a "listener" of music. Gracyk, unlike Cavicchi, does not offer any "curriculum solutions," possibly because he believes that the listening to music in identity construction occurs mainly outside of the influences of the educational institution:

...I would like to pursue the insight that there is a special relationship between music and identity. Furthermore, adolescence and young adulthood may be a distinctive stage of life, uniquely configured so that an individual's relationship to music plays a profound role in the formation of the very idea of self-identity...But if a sense of self-identity is an acquired concept that develops during adolescence, music is exceptionally suited to serve as a tangible model for making sense of both self and self-identity (p. 8).

In my own experiences with adolescents in various psychiatric and alternate educational institutional settings, "change" in one's sense of self was often accompanied by a shift or "change" in one's music, and vice versa. The vast majority of these young people were not players of music, yet they identified themselves so completely with the music that their passions seemed more heightened than most performers that I knew. However, the patronization of the listener by the musician has a long history, therefore for most performers to now consider the listener as a musical equal constitutes a quantum leap in tolerance. In her article *The Aims of Music Education: A Preliminary Excursion*, Estelle Jorgensen states:

Some form of listening has gone on for ages and is widespread among musical cultures. There always seem to be those who delight in the performances of others more skilled than themselves. All the societies I have studied have auditors and viewers of some sort watching other performers, sometimes from the margins of musical performances. Some listeners might also be composers, improvisers, or performers, but others are content to let their fellows do the composing, performing, or dancing while they watch and listen (pp. 33-34).



Recalling the writings of Friedrich Nietzsche from previous sections of this thesis paper, one can understand well the “contentedness” a listener can experience when listening to music, when called upon to describe the often indescribable. Yet, listeners needn’t have to fully explain themselves to find meaning in the music.

Gracyk maintains that listening to music is integral to the construction of self,

beginning with memory:

...music’s temporal quality gives it a unique capacity to integrate or “interlace” diverse experiences that happen to coincide with hearing the music. Rehearing the music (whether a song or a musical group or even a style of music) at a later date encourages us to vividly recall the associated events. Through their association with music, memories of otherwise mundane events, times, and places seem unusually integrated and meaningful. So to the extent that a sense of self-identity literally begins with one’s memories, music’s power to enhance and integrate selected extra-musical memories contributes to the construction of self in unpredictable but powerful ways. Music serves as an unconscious principle of selection in the ongoing project of assembling an identity from the total sum of one’s past (pp. 15-16).

Sometimes, memory and music have a closer relationship than most people care to recognize. Writing in *Kitsch and the Modern Predicament*, Roger Scruton callously negates a family memory based upon his “superior” taste in music:

In my grandmother's piano stool was a stack of sheet music from the twenties and thirties—Billy Mayerl, Horatio Nicholls, Albert Ketelbey—and this was my apprenticeship in popular culture. Such music was part of the family, played and sung with intense nostalgia on wedding anniversaries, birthdays, Christmases, and family visits. Every piece had an extra-musical meaning, a nimbus of memory and idle tears (p. 1).

Peter Kivy, exhibiting a good deal more sensitivity and humility than Scruton, admits emotions can be stirred by music. In his section on “enhanced formalism” from *The Corded Shell*, Kivy admits:

...it is not the music that (directly) arouses our emotions...but the images and remembrances of things past which the music stimulates. By and large...it

seems to be confirmed by my own experiences of what is essentially the “our song” phenomenon. Mahler’s *Knaben Wunderhorn* never fails to make me feel a bit off color when I hear it nowadays, even the “happy parts”, because it is associated with a particularly unhappy period of my life which it invariably calls to mind (p. 30).

It is reassuring to hear that two such influential music formalists consent to giving some of their personal experiences of associations with music and memory. In his touching memoir *Time Travels in Retrospace: Unpacking my Grandfather’s Trunk*, Morris Holbrook relates his experience of the loss of a childhood “state of grace,” only to regain it through the memory of music:

This loss came upon me gradually...But sometimes...sometimes, when I’m worried and I can’t sleep, instead of counting sheep, I let my mind drift back to those days, long ago, when as a young boy I would float down the Brule River in the stern of a canoe ...humming a soft tune to myself (p. 127).

The ritournelle, the ritornello, the refrain and the little return: these words all refer to the same concept, yet they all mean something different to each who has them. Gilles Deleuze refers to them in his philosophy of “musical becoming” or what one might call, his “music of philosophy”. In the book *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari attempt to explain this concept:

The role of the refrain has often been emphasized: it is territorial, a territorial assemblage. Bird songs: the bird sings to mark its territory. The Greek modes and Hindu rhythms are themselves territorial, provincial, regional. The refrain may assume other functions, amorous, professional or social, liturgical or cosmic: it always carries earth with it; it has a land (sometimes a spiritual land) as its concomitant; it has an essential relation to a Natal, a Native. A musical “nome” is a little tune, a melodic formula that seeks recognition and remains the bedrock or ground of polyphony (*cantus firmus*) (p 312).

Over twenty years ago, I had the sorrowful experience of sitting high in the upper balcony seats of the Vancouver Orpheum Theatre, for an “Opera at the Pops” concert. I recall being seated near an elderly woman in her eighties, who arrived and

left the theatre alone. She appeared to get lost in her own memories when hearing the arias from various operas, ranging from Mozart to Verdi to Puccini. The dear woman often closed her eyes and hummed along with many of the performances. I remember feeling immense sympathy for her, believing that these “little tunes” brought back her youth, her loves and her dreams.

During the first intermission, an irate man stormed up and berated her for “ruining” his time there. After all, he was a “season ticket holder” and paid “good money” to go to this series of concerts. The woman looked at him and said softly, “I’m sorry, I thought I was singing to myself.” Fortunately, she resumed her humming for the remainder of the program, remaining oblivious to the ill looks being given to her by the other people around her. This represents, to me, what I now believe Gilles Deleuze meant by a “ritournelle”. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari attempt to explain:

We would say that the *refrain* is properly musical, the block of content proper to music. A child comforts itself in the dark or claps its hands or invents a way of walking, adapting, adapting it to the cracks in the sidewalk. Or chants “Fort-Da” (psychoanalysts deal with the Fort-Da very poorly when they treat it as a phonological opposition or a symbolic component of the language-unconscious, when it is in fact a refrain). Tra la la. A woman sings to herself, “I heard her softly singing a tune to herself under her breath.” A bird launches into its refrain. All of music is pervaded by, in a thousand different ways, from Jannequin to Messaien. Frr, Frr. Music is pervaded by childhood blocks, by blocks of femininity. Music is pervaded by every minority and yet composes an immense power (pp. 299-300).

As introduced in Part II of this thesis, Deleuze’s concept of the “refrain” may be his “music of philosophy”. This “little return” represents the personal tie each of us has to “our” music, each being a single link in a chain forged by our own unique experiences with each “ritournelle”. These idiosyncratic “little tunes” can bring us

comfort in the times we feel we are “at home”, we can draw upon them to give us strength when we are lost in our “hour of agony” and these “refrains” help ease the pain we might feel when leaving those we love. Some of these “little tunes” we regularly return to might also be shared by others but this is not their primary function. Their role is to maintain our own sense of self and this can be critical to mental stability when we need strength to draw upon. The individual “ritournelle” has no loyalty to any genre of music, or any cultural hierarchy. In *Gilles Deleuze's ABC Primer*, Deleuze declares, “the refrain, it's the point in common between the popular song and music” (p. 3). The “refrain” can, in the end, be a kind of salvation for any of us who has ever encountered times of profound sadness or what Deleuze might refer to as “our hour of agony”. I look back painfully upon a day when a twelve-year-old boy, within minutes of hearing of his father’s death from cancer, told me at the music room door, “I want to play music.” And so we did. I recall no words being spoken by anyone for the entire class, only a brief “count in” as we played our instrumental arrangement of the Red Hot Chili Peppers *Can't Stop*, again and again. With each repetition, the music seemed to have a life force of its own and time seemed to suspend itself for that brief moment, on that day with my fellow young musician friends...the ineffable. I will leave with Deleuze’s words from *Music and Ritornello*, which too, shall pass, only to return again at some other time, in some other place.

**A child in the dark, gripped with fear, comforts himself  
by singing under his breath. He walks and halts to his song.  
Lost, he takes shelter, or orients himself with his little song as best he can.  
The song is like a rough sketch of a calming and stabilizing, calm and stable,  
center in the heart of chaos.**

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