

**Royal Musical Association
Music and Philosophy Study Group**

Inaugural Conference

ROYAL MUSICAL ASSOCIATION



MUSIC AND PHILOSOPHY STUDY GROUP

Department of Music, King's College London, 1-2 July 2011

The **Royal Musical Association Music and Philosophy Study Group** was established in May 2010, in the wake of a Royal Musical Association Study Day (in association with the British Society of Aesthetics) on the topic of Music and Philosophy, held at King's College London on the 20th February 2010.

Its aim is: *To provide a distinctive long-term forum offering opportunities for those with an interest in music and philosophy to share and discuss work, in the hope of furthering dialogue in this area.*

We plan to work towards this goal through four courses of activity:

- (i) An annual multi-day conference
- (ii) A series of smaller events
- (iii) A presence at other events
- (iv) An on-line presence centered around a website and mailing list

We gratefully acknowledge the overall support of the Royal Musical Association and the British Society of Aesthetics, and in particular the support provided for this conference by the British Society of Aesthetics, the Department of Music, King's College London, the University of Nottingham, the Institute of Musical Research, the Mind Association, and Music & Letters.

The Study Group is currently run by a five person **Committee** consisting of (confirmation subject to outcomes of elections on June 30):

- Prof Julian Dodd (Department of Philosophy, University of Manchester)
- Prof Julian Johnson (Department of Music, Royal Holloway, University of London)
- Mr Tomas McAuley (Department of Music, King's College London)
- Dr Nanette Nielsen (Department of Music, University of Nottingham)
- Prof Nick Zangwill (Department of Philosophy, Durham University)

Our website editor is Mr Golan Gur (Department of Music Sociology, Humboldt University Berlin)

Advisory Board

- Mark Evan Bonds (Department of Music, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)
- Andrew Bowie (School of Modern Languages, Literatures, and Cultures, Royal Holloway, University of London)
- Malcolm Budd
- Daniel Chua (School of Humanities, The University of Hong Kong)
- Marcel Cobussen (Academy of Creative and Performing Arts, Leiden University)
- Nicholas Cook (Faculty of Music, University of Cambridge)
- Stephen Davies (Faculty of Arts, The University of Auckland)
- John Deathridge (Department of Music, King's College London)
- Andreas Dorschel (University of Music and Performing Arts, Graz)
- Lydia Goehr (Department of Philosophy, Columbia University)
- Cynthia M. Grund (Department of Philosophy, University of Southern Denmark at Odense)
- Garry L. Hagberg (Philosophy, Bard College)
- Björn Heile (Department of Music, University of Glasgow)
- Peter Kivy (Department of Philosophy, Rutgers University)
- Jerrold Levinson (Department of Philosophy, University of Maryland)
- Susan McClary (Department of Music, University of California, Los Angeles)
- Max Paddison (Department of Music, Durham University)
- Michael Spitzer (School of Music, University of Liverpool)
- Hiroshi Yoshida (Graduate School for Core Ethics and Frontier Sciences, Ritsumeikan University, Kyoto)

Programme

Friday 1 July

9.15-10.00 Coffee and registration (Chapters)

10.00-11.15 **Plenary discussion panel: 'The meeting of disciplines: identifying challenges'** (Anatomy Theatre)

Nanette Nielsen (University of Nottingham), Chair

Panelists: Malcolm Budd, Tomas McAuley (King's College London), Aaron Ridley (University of Southampton), Michael Spitzer (University of Liverpool)

11.30-13.00 **Parallel Sessions I**

a. Rhythm and time (Anatomy Theatre)

Gary Peters (York St John University), Chair

1. Kathy Fry (King's College London), 'Nietzsche's analysis of rhythm in *Tristan und Isolde* Act III'
2. Stephen Decatur Smith (New York University), 'The sound of damaged life: Adorno, Bergson, Wagner and musical time'
3. Violaine Anger (University of Evry Val d'Essonne / École Polytechnique), 'The legacy of Merleau-Ponty's conception of rhythm and its impact on music'

b. Philosophy and performance (Lecture Theatre S-1.06)

Helga Rut Guðmundsdóttir (University of Iceland), Chair

1. Søren R. Frimodt-Møller (University of Southern Denmark), 'Norms, goals and group consciousness: rethinking the dynamics of a music performance'
2. Alessandro Bertinetto (University of Udine), 'Improvisation and musical ontology'
3. Stefan Östersjö (Lund University / Orpheus Institute, Ghent), 'Musical listening: the function of openness and the "horizon of the question" in the interaction between musicians'

c. Aesthetic experience and perception (St Davids Room)

Max Paddison (Durham University), Chair

1. Golan Gur (Humboldt University Berlin), 'Opera and *Weltanschauung*: Franz Brendel's reception of Wagner and its significance to the philosophy of music'
2. Paul Chaikin (University of Southern California), 'Opera and the persistence of aura'
3. Roger W. H. Savage (University of California, Los Angeles), 'Thinking testimony: music, mimesis and the quest for truth'

13.00-14.00 Lunch (Anatomy Museum / Green Room / Old Senior Common Room)

14.00-15.30 **Parallel Sessions II**

a. Eighteenth-century opera (Anatomy Theatre)

Reinhard Strohm (Oxford University), Chair

1. Bence Nanay (University of Antwerp / University of Cambridge), 'The contemporary relevance of the *Querelle des Bouffons*'
2. David Charlton (Royal Holloway, University of London), '"Philosophy" before the *philosophes*: French reform agendas'
3. Stephen Groves (University of Southampton), 'Art in nature's clothing: English "country" opera in the age of the landscape garden'

b. Process and event (Lecture Theatre S-1.06)

Huw Hallam (King's College London), Chair

1. Hugo Shirley (King's College London), "Inventing the invisible theatre": preservation and prestige in John Culshaw's Wagner'
2. Edward Campbell (University of Aberdeen), 'Operatic assemblages, sentence-images and the question of impurity'
3. Michael Gallope (University of Chicago), 'Music and the force of an event'

c. Philosophy, religion, mysticism (St Davids Room)

Chair: Julian Johnson (Royal Holloway, University of London)

1. Barry Stocker (Istanbul Technical University), 'Kierkegaard on essence and indeterminacy in Mozart'
2. Richard Bell (University of Nottingham), 'The miracle of conversion in Wagner's *Religion and Art* and *Parsifal*'
3. Mark Berry (Royal Holloway, University of London), 'Artistic representation in Schoenberg's *Moses und Aron*'

15.30-16.00 Coffee (Chapters)

16.00-17.00 **Parallel discussion forums**

a. Music and language (Anatomy Theatre)

Ruth Kempson (King's College London), Chair

Speakers: Andrew Bowie (Royal Holloway, University of London), David Clarke (Newcastle University / CRASSH, University of Cambridge), Robert Samuels (Open University)

b. Plato and Platonism (Anatomy Museum)

Julian Dodd (University of Manchester), Chair

Speakers: Michael Morris (University of Sussex), Christopher Norris (Cardiff University), James Young (University of Victoria)

c. Chinese opera, Chinese philosophy (St Davids Room)

David Hebert (Grieg Academy, Bergen University College), Chair

Speakers: Rachel Harris (School of Oriental and African Studies), Min Yen Ong (School of Oriental and African Studies), Ashley Thorpe (University of Reading)

17.15-18.30 **Keynote I, Professor Gary Tomlinson: 'Unthinking Wagnerism'** (Anatomy Theatre)

Michael Fend (King's College London), Chair

Nicholas Baragwanath (University of Nottingham), Respondent

18.30-19.30 Wine reception (Chapters)

Part-sponsored by the Centre for Music on Stage and Screen (MOSS), Department of Music, University of Nottingham

19.45 Conference Dinner (Venue: Bedford & Strand)

Saturday 2 July

9.15-10.00 Coffee and registration (Chapters)

10.00-11.45 **Parallel Sessions III**

a. RMA Visual Arts Study Group Session (Anatomy Theatre)

Lydia Goehr (Columbia University), Chair

1. Invited Speaker: Professor Robert Saxton (Oxford University), 'The Wandering Jew'
2. Charlotte de Mille (The Courtauld Institute of Art), Respondent
3. Diane Silverthorne (Birkbeck, University of London), 'Wagner's *Tristan* arranged Mahler and Roller: the visible deeds of music'

b. Arousal and engagement (Anatomy Museum)

John Deathridge (King's College London), Chair

1. David B. Levy and Julian Young (Wake Forest University), 'Wagner and his philosopher-critics'
2. Vanessa L. Rogers (Rhodes College), 'Opera, art, and erotic desire: Roger Scruton's *Violet*'
3. James Young (University of Victoria), 'Kivy on music and the arousal of emotion'

c. Music, language, dialogue (St Davids Room)

Kendall Walton (University of Michigan), Chair

1. Hanne Appelqvist (University of Helsinki), 'Wittgenstein on music and rules'
2. Martin Orwin (School of Oriental and African Studies), 'Dynamic syntax and meaning in music'
3. Laurence Goldstein (University of Kent), 'Tonal universals'

11.00-13.00 **Meeting of the Royal Musical Association Publications Committee** (Committee Members only)

12.00-13.15 **Keynote II, Professor Kendall Walton: "Two Kinds of Musical Expressiveness"** (Anatomy Theatre)

Nick Zangwill (Durham University), Chair

Catharine Abell (University of Manchester), Respondent

13.15-14.15 Lunch (Chapters)

14.00-16.00 **Meeting of the Council of the Royal Musical Association** (Council Members only)

14.15-15.15 Parallel Sessions IV

a. Twentieth-century England (Anatomy Theatre)

J. P. E. Harper-Scott (Royal Holloway, University of London), Chair

1. Sarah Collins (University of Queensland, Australia), 'The craft of inspiration: intellect and intuition in the formation of the aesthetic and moral self'
2. Karen Simecek (University of Warwick), 'Britten's *Death in Venice* and poetic understanding in music'

b. Philosophy and Renaissance music (Anatomy Museum)

Gary Tomlinson (Yale University), Chair

1. Maria Pontoppidan (University of Copenhagen), 'Deus ex musica? On opera, spirit and Ficinian virtue ethics'
2. Jonathan Owen Clark (Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance), 'Music and (a)historicism'

c. Ethical perspectives (St Davids Room)

Nanette Nielsen (University of Nottingham), Chair

1. Mark Whale (University of Toronto), 'Sincerity in music: the marriage of true sounds in *Le Nozze di Figaro*'

2. Tere Vadén (University of Tampere), ‘Music as symbols: how corrupted is it?’

15.30-16.15 Parallel Sessions V

a. ‘Pathways to authenticity in operatic interpretation’ (Anatomy Theatre)

Anthony Gritten (Middlesex University), Chair

Cynthia M. Grund (University of Southern Denmark) and – *via Skype* – William Westney (Texas Tech University)

b. Lecture-performance: ‘The Given Note: the enactment of meaning’ (Anatomy Museum)

Lauren Redhead (University of Leeds), Chair

Jason Dixon (University of East Anglia) and Férdia Stone-Davis (Independent Scholar)

c. Lecture-performance: ‘What kind of thing is liveness?: preliminary answers from the interior of an operatic voice’ (St Davids Room)

Daniel Leech-Wilkinson (King’s College London), Chair

Kathryn Whitney (Institute of Musical Research, School of Advanced Study, University of London)

16.15-16.45 Coffee

16.45-18.00 Keynote III, Professor Lydia Goehr: ‘The Life and Death of *Bohème*, or Painting the Red Sea Red’ (Anatomy Theatre)

Tomas McAuley (King’s College London), Chair

Roger Parker (King’s College London), Respondent

18.00-18.45 Closing plenary discussion: ‘Ways forward’ (Anatomy Theatre)

John Deathridge (King’s College London), Chair

Panellists: Lydia Goehr, Julian Johnson (Royal Holloway, University of London), Gary Tomlinson, and Kendall Walton

Here is a map for the restaurant where the conference dinner will be held, Bedford & Strand. It is located at the corner of Bedford Street and the Strand: turn left as you exit KCL, and continue straight ahead until you see Bedford Street on the right (at the star on the map).



PAPER ABSTRACTS

(by session, in chronological order)

Parallel Sessions I (Friday, 11.30-13.00)

Rhythm and time

(Anatomy Theatre)

Kathy Fry (King's College London)

'Nietzsche's analysis of rhythm in *Tristan und Isolde* Act III'

Throughout his writings, Nietzsche consistently refers to Wagner's opera *Tristan und Isolde* as the most significant artwork of the modern age. His fascination with what he describes as the '*opus metaphysicum* of all art' is usually understood to originate with his first publication, *The Birth of Tragedy*. Here he describes the third act of *Tristan* as a metaphysical synthesis of music and myth that recaptures the authentic unity of the Dionysian and Apollinian artistic drives epitomized in ancient Greek tragedy. Yet *The Birth of Tragedy* is not the only context in which the early Nietzsche incorporates an analysis of Wagner's opera. Two years prior to his first publication, whilst studying ancient Greek metrics as professor of classical philology at Basle, Nietzsche embarks on an analysis of the third act of *Tristan* that focuses not on the metaphysical relationship between poetry and tone, but on the structural function of rhythm and metre.

In this paper I suggest that this analytical engagement with rhythmic structure in the third act of *Tristan* provides the foundation to Nietzsche's later interpretation of the opera as a metaphysical artwork that epitomizes modernity. I present Nietzsche's analysis of *Tristan* Act III within the context of his philological notebooks on ancient Greek metrics and his early philosophical reflections on the relationship between rhythm and metre. I then examine the relationship between this unpublished early work on rhythm and his later published opinions on the rhythmic effect of Wagner's technique of 'endless melody'. I argue that Nietzsche's mature criticisms of decadence in Wagner's music are not merely the outcome of a reaction against the composer and a reversal of his earlier veneration of *Tristan*, but rather the culmination of a long-standing preoccupation with rhythmic structure and perception that is intrinsic to his philosophical critique of modernity.

Stephen Decatur Smith (New York University)

'The sound of damaged life: Adorno, Bergson, Wagner and musical time'

In his *Lectures on Negative Dialectics*, Adorno calls Henri Bergson one of his "spiritual forebears"—a philosopher who delineated problems and tasks that Adorno's generation could not ignore. This paper will argue that such a critical inheritance of Bergson is constitutive for Adorno's philosophy of music. In particular, it will demonstrate that Adorno's opposition between "empirical time and "musical time" may be read as a critical re-writing of Bergson's opposition between "spatial time" and "*durée*." It will argue, however, that this inheritance entails a crucial difference. Whereas, for Bergson, *durée* is the time of *élan vital*, a time of pure life, uncontaminated by death and space, for Adorno, musical time is *predicated on death and space*.

This paper will thus work to will reconstruct Adorno's engagement with Bergson, first, on the level of his philosophy in general, and then on the level of his philosophy of music. It will begin by arguing that Adorno, up to a point, accepts Bergson's critique of *spatial* time, but that Adorno also reinterprets this critique as an encrypted account of a socially produced and maintained denial of time as *transience*—an account, that is, of time as a container, or of time that is itself timeless. Similarly, this essay will argue that Adorno accepts Bergson's opposition between spatial time and another determination of time—but that, for Adorno, this other time is not Bergson's *durée*, but rather time as transience, the passage of time that means finitude and death, but also potentiality and hope. In turning to Adorno's philosophy of music, this paper will demonstrate the ways in which this

philosophical engagement with Bergson appears in Adorno's treatment of Wagner (especially his *Tannhäuser*) and Beethoven (especially his "Archduke Trio," op. 97).

Violaine Anger (University of Evry Val d'Essonne / École Polytechnique)

'The legacy of Merleau-Ponty's conception of rhythm and its impact on music'

Merleau-Ponty has rarely spoken of music. But through his studies on Husserl, he sparked off a reflexion on art, body, perception and language that can be of direct application to the understanding of music. One of his students, Henri Maldiney, has tried to reflect on art, and especially rhythm, within the scope of Merleau-Ponty's thought.

To think about rhythm in any piece of art supposes thinking first about the articulation of body, perception and language. Against any dualism, (visible/invisible, thought/speech, subject/object, being/appearance and so on), Merleau-Ponty shows that one must think the reversibility of categories, like the inside and the outside of clothes. One must then think of rhythm as a movement, an energetic principle, in opposition to any attempt at metrical analysis. In vocal music for instance, this makes possible a unified analysis, taking account of the piece as a whole, in its movement, as a study of the relationship between the organization of sounds and the words.

Maldiney, in turn, goes further. Beyond any formalization, beyond any doctrine, beyond any form, rhythm happens to be a "critical moment", a specific experience that can appear between two extreme surprises: "there is something", and "I exist". Therefore the "form" must be understood *at the same time* as genesis, appearance and expression; thus "rhythm" and "art" are the same.

Philosophy and performance

(Lecture Theatre S-1.06)

Søren R. Frimodt-Møller (University of Southern Denmark)

'Norms, goals and group consciousness: rethinking the dynamics of a music performance'

It is not a new idea to regard the coordination processes of a music ensemble as exemplary of human interaction in general (e.g. in workplaces). There has, however, been a tendency to presuppose a certain structure of organization in ensembles, namely one where a specific leader has the ultimate responsibility. This is an oversimplification. Especially when we dig into the coordination processes that take place in the *performance*, we find a far more varied picture of interpersonal relations than a simple leader-follower pattern. Of course, the larger the ensemble, the more dependent the performance will be on a previously decided organizational structure (some would say "hierarchy"), but even in a large scale music performance (and, to some extent, theatrical performance) such as an opera, a lot of crucial choices, especially in the face of coordination problems with other ensemble members, are left to the individual.

As part of my PhD dissertation *Playing by the Rules? A Philosophical Approach to Normativity and Coordination in Music Performance* (2010), I have utilized modeling strategies from contemporary branches of epistemic logic and game theory in order to show how following norms is a requirement for a musician who has the goal of reaching coordination with the rest of the group, and how the ensemble performance can, ideally, reflect an equilibrium between the individual's pursuit of her own goals and a sensitivity to the intentions for the performance that she imagines sharing with the rest of the group. In this presentation, I will give a brief overview of the main insights gathered through this research.

Alessandro Bertinetto (University of Udine)

'Improvisation and musical ontology'

The contemporary philosophical debate about the ontological status of musical works seems sometimes to have too little to do with the actual musical practices and experiences. The 'platonist' or

'structuralist' concept of musical works as eternal types – that are supposed to be discovered (and not created) by the composers and then instantiated in their performances (as argued by N. Wolterstorff, P. Kivy and J. Dodd) – is an exemplary case of this manner of thinking.

In the wake of this view Philip Alperson once argued that improvisations should be conceived as types with a single token (a 'singleton'). This philosophical position is highly problematic, because it goes against two ordinary intuitions concerning types as well as concerning improvisations:

1. types (can) have more than one token;

2. improvisations are ephemeral events, which are generated during their performance to the extent that they happen and disappear along with it (although they can be retained in recordings).

Alperson's claim about the ontology of musical improvisation must be rejected, because it is at odds with what musicians commonly think about musical improvisations, that are singular ephemeral events. Moreover musical improvisations show a general failure of musical platonism: musical platonism turns erroneously the work-concept, which is a historical construct, into a metaphysical one (as stated, for instance, by philosopher Lydia Goehr and musicologist Christopher Small). This failure results in its incapacity to grasp the specific ontological nature of music as a *human performing practice*.

Hence reorientating musical *ontology* upon the practice of improvisation as performance helps to enlighten some basic facts about *musical* ontology, because musical improvisation puts on the stage the processual, temporal and historical character of music.

Stefan Östersjö (Lund University / Orpheus Institute, Ghent)

'Musical listening: the function of openness and the "horizon of the question" in the interaction between musicians'

This paper is a philosophical inquiry into how the musician's listening functions as a creative and communicative tool in the interaction between musicians. The presentation draws on a study of video material of my collaboration with the composer Richard Karpen.

In Gadamer's discussion of the fundamental conditions for the hermeneutic experience, he advocates a radical kind of openness (Gadamer, 2004, p. 355). Rather than elaborating on this primary state of openness through listening, he argues that the essence of the question is what constitutes the identity of this openness (2004, p. 357). Gemma Corradi Fiumara Fiumara - in her book *The Other Side of Language: a philosophy of listening* (1990) – contrasts this emphasis on the verbal domain, finding that our culture suffers from a mechanism of 'saying-without-listening' that has 'multiplied and spread, to finally constitute itself a generalized form of domination and control (pp. 2-3). The unlimited openness of listening is found to be a pre-requisite more fundamental than the question itself (ibid pp 33-34).

However, in my reading of Gadamer, the way in which the question poses itself to the interpreter is intimately linked to the kind of listening that Heidegger advocated saying that 'the authentic attitude of thinking is not a putting of questions – rather it is listening to the grant, the promise of what is to be put in question (Heidegger, 1971, p. 71)'. Maurice Merleau-Ponty reminds us of the primacy of embodied thinking in the arts, when the painter's vision becomes gesture, when he 'thinks in painting' (Merleau-Ponty, 1964, p. 178). I will argue that the horizon of the question in musical dialogue may also emerge out of 'thinking in music' rather than in verbal discourse.

Aesthetic experience and perception

(St Davids Room)

Golan Gur (Humboldt University Berlin)

'Opera and *Weltanschauung*: Franz Brendel's reception of Wagner and its significance to the philosophy of music'

(Karl) Franz Brendel (1811-1868) was undoubtedly among the most influential authors on music during the nineteenth century. Best known as Robert Schumann's successor in editing the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, Brendel was also the foremost spokesman and theorist of the "New German School", consisting of Berlioz, Liszt and Richard Wagner, among others. Through his editorial activity and numerous publications, Brendel tried to achieve what he believed was the primary task of musical criticism: to promote and justify the progressive music of his time. This task was carried out most comprehensively in his widely-read *Geschichte der Musik in Italien, Deutschland und Frankreich* which appeared in many editions since its first publication in 1851. In this essay, Brendel developed a philosophical account of music history in which Wagner's musical dramas take the form of an inevitable development, being the telos of the historical progress of music. A perusal of his book reveals the extent to which Brendel's ideas were shaped in conjunction with the leading philosophical paradigms of the day, particularly Hegelianism. Drawing directly on Hegel, Brendel construed the development of music as following the same course of evolving self-awareness that the philosopher assigned to history as a whole. My paper focuses on Brendel's reception of Wagner, particularly his proposal that the latter's musical dramas signify the beginning of a new epoch in music, one in which artistic creation is joined and sustained by philosophical "*Weltanschauung*". Following this, I will explore Brendel's employment of Hegelian ideas and, on this basis, suggest an interpretation of my own to the significance of Wagner and the New German School to the relationship between music and philosophy.

Paul Chaikin (University of Southern California)

'Opera and the persistence of aura'

On a typical night at the opera, the musico-dramatic synthesis that takes place on stage is saturated with atmospheric charm, but the proceedings off-stage are no less extravagant. A well-heeled crowd congregates in front of a stately façade, and inside, marble tiles and mirrors compound the white light of crystal chandeliers. The auditorium itself is upholstered in velvet, and the crowd behaves in accordance with an implicit sense of ceremony. A shimmering aura haunts the entire affair.

For Walter Benjamin, the word aura gives a name to the "ornamental halo" that supplements our contemplative immersion in a work of art. A number of subsequent theorists—from Theodor Adorno and Jürgen Habermas to Arthur Danto and Noël Carroll—have wrestled with Benjamin's elucidation of aura. All the same, the specific nature of this concept remains rather difficult to define. For Benjamin, aura is airy and invisible; for Adorno, it's "the sorcery that emanates from music." Against this rather hazy backdrop, I would like to suggest that the phenomenon that Benjamin refers to as aura encapsulates an essential co-determinant of aesthetic perception, at least within artistic traditions governed by the ideals of aesthetic autonomy.

A more refined conception of aura can direct us towards a more complete understanding of *how* contextual constraints help shape aesthetic perception into a meaningful field of experience. In this paper, I hope to show how opera house architecture and interior design—including the Neoclassical edifice, the glimmering vestibules, and the plush interior—condition perception, transporting the public into a state of mind receptive to the ideals of aesthetic autonomy and the utopian conceits of operatic storytelling.

Roger W. H. Savage (University of California, Los Angeles)

'Thinking testimony: music, mimesis and the quest for truth'

Paul Ricoeur's contention that the work of art might provide a model for thinking about testimony opens the way to a new understanding of music's critical value. Theodor W. Adorno's aesthetic theory underscores the importance of the distance separating music from social reality. By placing this distance at the centre of his theory of music's and art's social truth, Adorno succeeds in highlighting the aporia of politically committed art. Where art for art's sake denies its ineradicable connection with reality, committed art cancels the distance that for Adorno is the condition of music's social truth.

The significance that Adorno attached to music's critical relation to society, however, does not exhaust the question of music's truth. Following Ricoeur's suggestion that not even Martin Heidegger's concept of truth as manifestation (*aletheia*) does justice to the demand that *mimesis* places on the way we think about truth, I argue that the work's retreat from the real is more properly attributable to the work of imagination. In contrast to postmodern deconstructions of the idea of absolute music, this retreat is the negative condition for redescribing affective dimensions of our experiences. Music's affective power is attributable to the communicability of feelings and moods that individual works possess. Hence its ontological vehemence: through redescribing our inherence in the world, music opens us to the world anew.

Parallel Sessions II (Friday, 14.00-15.30)

Eighteenth-century opera

(Anatomy Theatre)

Bence Nanay (University of Antwerp / University of Cambridge)

'The contemporary relevance of the Querelle des Bouffons'

One the face of it, the Querelle des Bouffons was a very public debate in the mid-18th Century Paris about the respective merits of French and Italian operas, with all the luminaries of the time taking sides – Rameau in one corner, Rousseau in the other, the other Encyclopedists, including Diderot, D'Alambert and Marmontel, somewhere in between. But the Querelle has many layers, some political, some personal, some music theoretical and finally, some philosophical.

I will focus on the (sub-)debate about the appropriate emotional reaction in the face of an opera performance and argue that this debate is valuable in as much as it shows us how what is routinely taken to be the default emotional engagement with (pre-20th Century) operas, namely, one that is based on identification with or 'sympathy' towards one of the protagonists, is a historically situated phenomenon that emerged around the time of the Querelle des Bouffons – and that by no means served as the only model of emotional engagement with operas in the next Century or so. An important consequence of this is that we need to re-evaluate the way we listen to, perform, and even think about, some of the most important pre-20th Century operas.

David Charlton (Royal Holloway, University of London)

"Philosophy" before the *philosophes*: French reform agendas'

There were different kinds of opera reform in mid-eighteenth-century France, and sure signs of discontent in the courtly *status quo* appeared in the 1740s. The academician Pierre-Matthieu de Chassiron of La Rochelle delivered *Dissertation sur le génie de l'Opéra* on 26 April 1741, extensively quoted and commented upon in *Mercur de France*. Cahusac and Rameau wrote their 1747 'Egyptian' opera, *Les Fêtes de l'Hymen et de l'Amour*, taking inspiration from Diodorus Siculus and Terrasson's *Séthos*. Its philosophy of kingship features Osiris, one of civilisation's original god-kings. He encounters the Amazons, led by a predictably fierce Orthésie, who debates theology with him; she makes to strike him, whereupon Osiris 'offers himself to her blows'.

Chassiron's later paper in 1751-52 paper was issued and circulated as *Dissertation sur les tragédies-opéra*: he applauds 'Osiris', and his words were quoted by D'Aquin de Château-Lyon in *Lettres sur les hommes célèbres*. D'Aquin also made the link with Metastasio's librettos. In 1749, French translations of four such texts appeared. Metastasio was seen as a potential solution to the reform of French opera, not musically, but because his fables were a model for opera's ability to preach to Louis XV. When Voltaire got the chance to write opera for the court (*Le Temple de la Gloire*, 1745, music by Rameau) he emblazoned Metastasio's name in the libretto and constructed three *entrées* about leaders who learn. And it was Cahusac who, also in 1745, paraphrased *La Clemenza di*

Tito in another courtly libretto for Rameau, *Les Fêtes de Polimnie*. Louis XV liked Rameau's music; his view of opera was more progressive than might be imagined.

Stephen Groves (University of Southampton)

'Art in nature's clothing: English "country" opera in the age of the landscape garden'

The eighteenth-century Picturesque movement focused on the pleasure to be gained from the contemplation of scenes of nature. But Picturesque theorists did not relegate art's status. Following Aristotle, they averred that since nature was imperfect, art was a necessity. This attitude manifested itself in idealized representations of landscape by painters and garden designers as well as an emerging taste for rural tourism, especially in England.

Two theorists of the time felt able to extend the application of the Picturesque aesthetic so that it lay within music's ambit: Uvedale Price suggested that Picturesque pleasure could be *created* as well as *found* by man within the natural landscape. Thus, Price saw the irregularity, variety, surprises and disjunction of Picturesque scenes as elements of form and narrative found in the best music. William Crotch's 1798 assessment of a wide range of music past and present found the converse - that Picturesque music was skittish and light-hearted, a 'lower' type compared to those of Sublime' and 'Beautiful'.

More recently the work of the musicologist, Annette Richards, has viewed the fantasias of Carl Phillip Emmanuel Bach and the late symphonies of Joseph Haydn as expressions of the Picturesque sensibility. The theories of Price and Crotch, together with Richards's, rely on the metonyms of 'irregularity', 'surprise' and 'digression', transferences that provide useful analogies but do not guarantee that such works contain the sound of nature, the appreciation of nature or that they are *about* nature, as in landscaped gardens and pastoral poetry.

This paper explores the intersections between Picturesque theory and eighteenth-century English opera. By focusing on works that utilize texts which apprehend themes of native landscape, an alternative, more representational and less abstract attitude to the Picturesque than that of Price, Crotch and Richards can emerge.

Process and event

(Lecture Theatre S-1.06)

Hugo Shirley (King's College London)

“Inventing the invisible theatre”: preservation and prestige in John Culshaw's Wagner'

Advances in the technology of reproduction and changes in the economics of the recording industry have, in recent years, brought a fundamental change to the way opera is experienced outside the opera house. Filmed performances and high-definition cinema broadcasts have largely replaced the large-scale studio recording. 'Liveness', whose attendant imperfections were banished in a studio product aspiring to score-like permanence, has been reclaimed as a virtue that only today's technology can hope to capture.

This paper addresses a similarly momentous shift in the technological mediation of operatic performance: one that came with the development of stereo recording and the long-playing record. Building on the work of Eric Clarke and David Patmore, I take the example of record producer John Culshaw, and specifically of the 'Solti *Ring*' (recorded 1958-66). This project was framed within a familiar rhetoric of authenticity; but Culshaw went further in setting out to realise Wagner's dubious intention of 'inventing the invisible theatre'. As such, this *Ring* represented a high-point of technological idealism: one that set out to create, to use Gary Tomlinson's phrase, 'a new realm of operatic metaphysics'.

This paper explores that metaphysics and examines critically the Culshaw project's attempts to accumulate various forms of prestige: (high-)fidelity; the insistence on Vienna—its orchestra and

tradition—as a prerequisite for the venture; the startling iconography of the box-set. In particular I will consider whether initiatives such as Culshaw's *Ring* deserve a more prominent place in musicological discourse. I ask where, if at all, it might be positioned with regard to more recent work on music in performance: after all, it encouraged solitary listening—a state seemingly antithetical to the 'liveness' and the sense of community created by today's HD broadcasts. Finally, I want to consider this invitation to ritualistic 'onanism through the ear' (Wayne Koestenbaum's mordant formulation) as part of a complicated act of conservation in which the newest technology was co-opted to 'save' the *Ring* from revisionist theatrical productions of the post-war period.

Edward Campbell (University of Aberdeen)

'Operatic assemblages, sentence-images and the question of impurity'

In the mid-twentieth century, it seemed that opera was a moribund art form, surviving at best on the back of a canon of great historical works. While its future prospects looked bleak, the composition of many new operas/music theatre pieces in the period from 1978 to the present marked a perhaps unexpected renaissance of the art-form.

The current paper is concerned particularly with contemporary opera/music theatre pieces insofar as they can be conceived, after Deleuze, as assemblages of heterogeneous forces. Contemporary operatic/music theatre works are formed from an unprecedented array of varied forces including developments in vocal writing, experimental approaches to narrative and text, plurality of interpretation, mobile elements, multiple stages, lighting, multimedia, electronic sound, dance, new musical idioms, variable instrumental forces and so on. While Wagner in the nineteenth century conceptualised the music drama as the 'total work of art', it remains to early twenty-first century scholars to consider the workings of the assemblages that comprise contemporary operatic/music theatre pieces, which this paper will strive to accomplish through consideration of the work of philosophers, Gilles Deleuze, Alain Badiou and Jacques Rancière.

Badiou's provocative distinction of the kinds of assemblages that are produced in theatre (pure) and cinema (impure) raises the question of the nature of the assemblages we are presented with in contemporary opera/music theatre. In tackling this question we will call on Deleuze's concept of the 'assemblage' and Rancière's concept of the 'sentence-image' as ways of analysing and interpreting some brief examples from operatic/music theatre works by a range of composers and theorists including Brecht, Berio, Eco, Aperghis, Dusapin, Levinas, Dillon and Neuwirth.

Michael Gallope (University of Chicago)

'Music and the force of an event'

Despite obvious differences of methodology, Ernst Bloch, Theodor Adorno, Vladimir Jankélévitch, and Gilles Deleuze all tried to demonstrate that certain ethical practices of modernist music, variously prescribed and properly understood, would enable *singular events* that enacted philosophical breaks with history, with what exists, with knowable systems, with actual rules and laws. As a counterproposal, I ask: how does one think of music's relationship to events in a more substantial and consequential way than simply through modernist exemplars, hermeneutics, ontology, or anything else that lies exclusively within the boundaries of aesthetics and philosophy? That is, if music has an *immanent* (and not merely philosophical, dialectical, or ontological) relationship to events, how is it that philosophy can help explain music's role in events that have substantial socio-political consequences, even as the events may remain inessential to the poetic and artistic content of the music involved?

As a point of departure, I will survey ontological meditations on experiences of "the political" that extend from the work of Carl Schmitt, Martin Heidegger, and their recent leftist interpreters (namely Badiou, Žižek, Nancy, Lefort, Johnston, Mouffe, and Laclau). A dominant strain of this intellectual field holds that the most essential moments of political experience and activation (events with consequences) occur via the mediation of a signifier. In dialogue with this structuralist proposal, I will

develop some initial ideas as to how music and affective force are linked alongside linguistic structure in certain exemplary political experiences. Far from presenting any comprehensive answers, at this stage I will just delineate some problems these proposals may confront.

Philosophy, religion, mysticism

(St Davids Room)

Barry Stocker (Istanbul Technical University)

'Kierkegaard on essence and indeterminacy in Mozart'

In *Either/Or*, Kierkegaard takes *Don Giovanni* as the essential opera and the essential work of music. That is because he regards music as the art form most close to sensation, and therefore as the art form most suited to the Don Juan legend. Though there is an argument for the purity of music, Kierkegaard also finds that the essential work of musical art should have a text. Music is on the boundary of language, and they both refer to time. The temporal nature of music and language, make musical art and poetry (in the broadest sense) the only forms of art which refer to time. Music contains something linguistic in it, through time and through sensation. Pure sensation is the experience of pure moments of time, but the intense, even demonic sensation of desire, can only be fully experienced with reference to seduction. Seduction turns desire into something concerned with the next moment, and the experience of temporality rather than mere isolated moments. The element of time, and of trickery required in seduction, make poetry the necessary accompaniment to music. What Kierkegaard also suggests, more indirectly is the necessity of music in writing, including his own writing, and particularly in the composition of *Either/Or*. Drama without music cannot express the story of Don Juan adequately, as the verbal strategies of seduction become too prominent and make the Don absurd rather than demonic. The capacities of language and reflection overwhelm music, though they have a necessary part of it. In Kierkegaard's examination of *Don Giovanni*, the Don himself represents an equivocation between essential and indeterminate forms of character, and this equivocation is applied to the opera as a whole, revealing Kierkegaard's own view of the nature of art forms, and of all communication.

Richard Bell (University of Nottingham)

'The miracle of conversion in Wagner's *Religion and Art* and *Parsifal*'

In the fourth paragraph of *Religion and Art*, Wagner deals with the "conversion (Umkehr) of the will" in the sense of coming to a new understanding; but rather than putting forward a simple "Gnostic" view (emphasizing "knowledge"), he suggests that conversion is through union with Jesus which is achieved through faith in him. It is through this union that one can come to see the world and its "appearances" ("Erscheinungen") not as "the most absolute of realities" ("das Aller-Realste") but rather as "optical illusion" ("augenscheinlich") and "null" ("nichtig"); the truth ("das eigentliche Wahre") lies beyond this phenomenal world. This new understanding can only come about by means of a "miracle" ("Wunder"). Wagner gives what can be called a traditional "Enlightenment" definition of miracle: it is a "suspension of the laws of nature" ("Aufhebung der Gesetze der Natur"). But since we ourselves impose such laws on our experience, something which is inextricably linked to our brain functions ("Gehirnfunktionen"), then the very conversion of the will *contains within itself* the suspension of the laws of nature. Such conversion can only come about by means of something beyond nature, by a "superhuman power", i.e. by union with the "kingdom of God". Wagner may be implicitly equating this kingdom with Jesus himself since in the third paragraph he explains that "[t]o believe in him, means . . . to strive for union with him". Wagner's argument not only throws light on Kundry's conversion in *Parsifal* but also hints at the way faith (which is essential for conversion) can *effect* miracle.

Mark Berry (Royal Holloway, University of London)

'Artistic representation in Schoenberg's *Moses und Aron*'

In his final, incomplete – uncompleteable? – opera, *Moses und Aron*, Arnold Schoenberg addresses the very possibility of artistic representation and 'effect'. Schoenberg works out a compositional and philosophical dialectic between freedom and organisation, questioning the acceptability and indeed possibility of artistic representation and 'effect'. The goal ultimately forms a higher form of spiritual awareness, in which the Idea – that most problematical yet truly fundamental concept in his thought – may perhaps yet be perceived: a Promised Land perhaps, following years of wandering in the Wilderness. An 'Unrepresentable God,' in the words of Schoenberg's own libretto, is also 'the inexpressible Idea of many meanings'.

Every bar in *Moses*, every note even, is derived from the initial note-row, just as everything ultimately must derive from the Eternal One. It seems that the astonishing variety of Schoenbergian expression could only come forth from such strict organisation. Such is the Unity of Creation: only through this increasingly draconian system can autonomy be maintained. However, organisation is held at a mystical remove; the row, like the Almighty Himself, is ever present in its ordering capacity but rarely heard 'whole'. It is not until the second scene that the row is presented in linear fashion in a single voice, and this is upon the appearance of the all-too-skilled communicator Aron, suggesting something idolatrous and politically questionable (dictatorship?). This is not the way of Moses, who haltingly speaks rather than employing Aron's sinuous *bel canto*, yet Moses also seems unpalatably, dangerously authoritarian. The problem that *Moses und Aron* presents, which I shall relate to broader debates concerning musical modernism, is how one might engage with artistic representation at all: do both paths, and indeed any further alternatives, necessarily result in failure?

Parallel Sessions III (Saturday 2 July, 10.00-11.45)

RMA Visual Arts Study Group Session

(Anatomy Theatre)

Professor Robert Saxton (Worcester College, Oxford University), Invited Speaker

'The Wandering Jew'

Wanderers feature in virtually all cultures, whether as Odysseus, as Wotan in *The Ring*, as 'The Flying Dutchman', or as 'The Wanderer' of the 6th century Anglo-Saxon poem of that name. Tracing the genesis of his opera, or 'musico-dramatic myth', *The Wandering Jew*, a figure commonly understood as the subject of anti-Semitic legend, Professor Saxton challenges the boundaries between myth and fairy-tale, philosophy and ethics, Greek drama and Judaic history. In part inspired by the book of the same name by East-German author, Stefan Heym (alias Helmut Flieg), Saxton describes the particular challenges and opportunities presented by the intended medium for this work, which was commissioned by BBC Radio 3 for an audience of 'unseeing' listeners.

Charlotte de Mille (The Courtauld Institute of Art)

Respondent

Diane Silverthorne (Birkbeck, University of London)

'Wagner's *Tristan* arranged Mahler and Roller: the visible deeds of music'

At some point in the months preceding the 1903 staging of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* at the Vienna Court Opera under the direction of Gustav Mahler, Alfred Roller, the Vienna Secession designer, produced a series of drawings in black-and-white ink depicting the figures of the two protagonists. These previously unpublished drawings are representative neither of costume nor stage designs, although Roller created both for this notable production. As this paper explores, the drawings suggest

a profound engagement with the ideas of Wagnerian stage-design theorist, Adolphe Appia, who defined the singular challenges for the visualisation of this music drama, characterising the audience as “blind supernumeraries”.

In all accounts of this production, emphasis has been placed on the manifestation of Wagner’s unrealised vision for this work by harnessing new technical resources in stage lighting to orchestrate the expressive light-and-colour effects for each of the three acts. Roller’s early drawings and his stage-design paintings demonstrate a concern for the audience experience which relied on the inherent inner expressiveness of the composer’s text. This concern is embodied in the notions of ‘Schein’, (semblance), after Nietzsche, and ‘Stimmung’ (musical mood), an insistent theme of Wagner’s writings. The affects of the production were suggestive of the convergence of visual, musical and dramatic arts as ‘Zeitkunst’ (temporal art), Adorno’s term for the creation of temporal relationships among the constituent parts of the work.

Arousal and engagement (Anatomy Museum)

David B. Levy and Julian Young (Wake Forest University) **‘Wagner and his philosopher-critics’**

We examine the criticisms of Wagner made by Nietzsche and Adorno. Nietzsche makes three major claims: that Wagner is a paradigm example of nineteenth-century ‘decadence’ in that he has no command of large-scale form, that his works are ‘life-denying’, and that as both man and artist he is a ‘tyrant’ who seeks to dominate and manipulate our feelings. Like Nietzsche, Adorno criticises Wagner on formal grounds. But his criticism is more fundamental: the whole notion of a *Gesamtkunstwerk* is fundamentally misconceived: Mozartian ‘configuration’ rather than Wagnerian ‘identification’ is the way words and music should be combined. Like Nietzsche, too, Adorno views Wagner as tyrannical, a ‘demagogue of the feelings’. Unlike Nietzsche, however, he identifies what he claims to be the goal of Wagner’s manipulation: the aim is to turn us into proto-Nazis. We defend Wagner against all these charges with the exception of ‘life-denial’. Young agrees with Nietzsche that Wagner’s post-Schopenhauerian works are, and are intended to be, ‘life-denying’, Levy disputes this.

Vanessa L. Rogers (Rhodes College) **‘Opera, art, and erotic desire: Roger Scruton’s *Violet*’**

In Roger Scruton’s 1997 book, *Aesthetics of Music*, he tells us that any art that does not aspire towards salvation, beauty, and ‘Truth’ is mere débris. But does his own art measure up to these high ideals?

My paper explores Scruton’s operatic artworks, focusing primarily on *Violet* (2005), a musically conservative opera with a radical subject: the highly unconventional musician Violet Gordon Woodhouse. The protagonist, who lives with her husband in a *ménage-a-cinq* around the time of the Great War, invites Scruton’s audiences to think about moral topics including sublimated love, chastity, and sexual desire. As Scruton has explored extensively in his writings (*The Artistic Endeavour*, *Beauty, Art and Imagination*), art/beauty can have both an edifying side and a tempting side. This dual nature is perhaps what motivates Violet in the beginning of the opera to resist the flesh and remain true to immaterial beauty (stamping out all desire by playing the ‘frosty’ notes of the harpsichord), but it is also what inspires her later in the work to succumb to the passions and indulge in romantic love. This, of course, is her demise – she cannot reconcile her fall with her ‘love for the classics’ (i.e. her obsession with purity and beauty), and all is lost.

Violet is an opera about the dual nature of art/beauty; it is fitting, then, that this opera was written by a philosopher who has long been concerned with ethics in art. Incorporating material from my recent interview with Scruton, I will use *Violet* as a test-case for evaluating his theory of aesthetics, and will address several questions in this paper: Does this opera serve a moral function? Are there

other extra-aesthetic significances of a representational, symbolic, or expressive kind? Do moral and philosophical issues emerge out of this artwork, or is the art a pretext for presenting the issues beyond it? And finally, in what way does the opera *Violet* serve as an example of Scruton's high aesthetic and moral ideals?

James Young (University of Victoria)

'Kivy on music and the arousal of emotions'

In recent writings, Peter Kivy has continued to express scepticism about the suggestion that music arouses 'garden-variety' emotions such as fear, sadness, joy and so on. He has given arguments for the claim that listeners who report emotions are systematically confusing the arousal of emotion with the expression of emotion by music. He has also cast doubt on the results of psychologists who have reported empirical evidence for the claim that music arouses emotions. In making these claims Kivy is guilty of presenting a series of fallacious and implausible arguments. The empirical evidence strongly suggests that music arouses garden-variety emotions.

Music, language, dialogue

(St Davids Room)

Hanne Appelqvist (University of Helsinki)

'Wittgenstein on music and rules'

According to Wittgenstein's later philosophy, language is a rule-governed activity. As such, it is a normative phenomenon, described by Wittgenstein in terms of rule-following, correctness, and justification. Interestingly, Wittgenstein applies the notion of rules to music as well. He compares the understanding of a musical theme to the understanding of a sentence, thus suggesting that also musical understanding is a form of rule-following. He claims that correctness is a more important aesthetic attribute than beauty and argues that without knowledge of musical rules one could not understand music. But how should we understand the nature of these musical rules? What kind of normativity is the normativity marked by them? In this paper, I offer an answer by discussing Wittgenstein's remarks on music. In doing so, I will address two objections against the view of musical understanding as a form of rule-following. According to the first, there are many people we would happily credit with musical understanding despite the fact that they could not explicitly cite, for example, the rules of harmony and counterpoint. According to the second, too much emphasis on the rules of music makes it impossible to appreciate and account for musical creativity. Wittgenstein's treatment of these objections gives us important insight into how he understood the nature of rules. In my view, it also gives us good reason to not yet give up the view of music and musical understanding as essentially rule-governed phenomena.

Martin Orwin (School of Oriental and African Studies)

'Dynamic Syntax and meaning in music'

The intuitive relationship between language and music has been of interest to scholars in various disciplines for a long time and more recently has been the subject of much discussion in the fields of psychology and cognitive science where experimental evidence has produced tantalizing glimpses of what the human cognitive capacities for music and language might share. The theoretical study of structure in music has also acknowledged this relation, and Lerdahl and Jackendoff's *A Generative Theory of Tonal Music** (which draws heavily from linguistics) remains perhaps the most influential and widely known formal theory of musical structure that shares something with linguistic theory.

The notion of meaning in music is one which has also taxed musicologists, philosophers and others and there is a wide ranging literature on this topic, however this has not drawn so much on the study of semantics and pragmatics in natural language, in particular formal semantics. In this paper I propose

the idea that an approach to music based on the principles of a recent model of natural language called Dynamic Syntax may allow us to state more formally what lies within the domain of music 'semantics' and what lies within the domain of music 'pragmatics' and how these notions compare when used in the contexts of music and of natural language. I shall do this by looking conceptually at the ideas upon which Dynamic Syntax is based and by suggesting a single notion, which I call 'resolution'. This may be expressed formally in the Dynamic Syntax model and may be posited as applying to both language and music. I suggest it manifests itself in natural language in what we conceive of as semantics and in music allows us to speak of an analogous notion which we might call the semantics of music.

* Lerdahl, F. & R. Jackendoff (1983) *A Generative Theory of Tonal Music*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press.

Laurence Goldstein (University of Kent)

'Tonal universals'

Roman Jakobson has given a plausible biological explanation of why the sound /mama/ is common to, and serves the same purpose in, many otherwise widely diverse linguistic communities. And there are obviously biological explanations of why oral warnings conveyed over large distances are universally loud, and cries of sharp human pain universally high pitched. Are there perhaps more subtle emotions universally conveyed by distinctive patterns of sound? This question becomes immediately more tractable if we turn our attention away from the sounds of speech and towards the sounds of music.

Certain melodies strike us — almost all of us who have grown up in a common musical culture — as martial, others as plaintive, others as cheerful, others as mournful, and so on. There seems to be a psychophysical relation between certain tone patterns and the emotions they convey and invoke. In this paper, I concentrate on the emotion of love and the question of whether there are tonal contours distinctive of the expression of love. It might seem that opera would be the obvious place to look, because love is a prevalent theme, announced simultaneously in words and music. However, there is a difficulty about authenticity; writing from a third person perspective about an emotion that one has never experienced is quite different from giving expression in words or music to what one has sharply felt. We need to cast our net wide, and look at the 16th Century minstrel tradition, at some of the love songs of the great Hollywood era of the 1930s and 1940s, at composers who knew the delights and the torments of love. Investigation reveals that, for all its profundity, the emotion of love is conveyed in very simple musical patterns.

Parallel Sessions IV (Saturday 2 July, 14.15-15.15)

Twentieth-century England

(Anatomy Theatre)

Sarah Collins (University of Queensland, Australia)

'The craft of inspiration: intellect and intuition in the formation of the aesthetic and moral self'

Almost three decades after the calamitous demise of Victorian literary Aestheticism the metaphysically-oriented aesthetic outlook which had animated the movement began to re-emerge in the writings of a handful of English music critics. Despite their vehement rejection of aesthetic associations composer-critics such as Philip Heseltine (Peter Warlock) (1894-1930), Cecil Gray (1895-1951), Kaikhosru Sorabji (1892-1988) and Cyril Scott (1879-1970) each expressed views symptomatic of Aestheticism through their peculiar treatment of questions relating to inspiration, genius, beauty, symbol, the function of art and artist, music's capability to express ideas, and its capacity to effect moral change.

As a central aesthetic tenet each identified the artist's duty to practice techniques of the mind which would enhance their intuitive faculty, casting inspiration as a 'deliberate and conscious act of a trained will'.* The purity of the artist's perception of aesthetic beauty and their honesty in transcribing their new 'knowledge' in artistic form were, in this sense, envisioned as skills which could be practiced and perfected, and which also thereby contained a significant ethical status.

This paper will highlight the crucial intermingling of the aesthetic with the metaphysical and ethical in selected inter-war conceptions of the act of inspiration in musical composition and explore the collaged nature of these ideas as they draw from idealism, Aestheticism and esotericism. In addition, it will offer a re-description of the intuitive practices outlined as activities of self-cultivation. This re-description will provide a platform upon which we can examine the functional elements of the aesthetic mandate in a manner which emancipates the outlook from its historical moment, thereby allowing us to construe the performative character of such ideas.

* Kaikhosru Sorabji, *Mi Contra Fa: The Immoralisings of a Machiavellian Musician* (London: Porcupine, 1947) 74-5.

Karen Simecek (University of Warwick)

'Britten's *Death in Venice* and poetic understanding in music'

I will explore ways in which we understand an opera such as Benjamin Britten's *Death in Venice*, by developing my account of how we engage with and experience lyrical poetry. I will argue that our engagement with lyric poetry requires us to forge connections within the work, have a heightened awareness of design, and respond emotionally, creatively and imaginatively to the work. Through our engagement with the work, the poetic properties modify our understanding of the words, and consequently our understanding of the work. When poetry is set to music, as in the case of opera, the musical elements take on greater significance in our experience of the work and provide us with aesthetic elements which can evoke mood, feeling and emotion, enhancing our understanding by encouraging us to forge connections.

The main part of this argument will be in showing the way in which music can be meaning bearing. I will demonstrate that how we get access to this meaning through our engagement with the work is not merely appreciating the form and content but the experience that arises from our engagement with the work.

To support my claim, I will focus on examples of recurring motifs in the opera *Death in Venice* that allow the listener to connect meaning through similarity in sound, which ultimately affects their understanding of the work as a whole. Also, I will demonstrate that such musical motifs modify our understanding of the words; on hearing the words without the musical setting, the listener would understand something different.

Philosophy and Renaissance music (Anatomy Museum)

Maria Pontoppidan (University of Copenhagen)

'Deus ex musica? On opera, spirit and Ficinian virtue ethics'

It is well established that Neoplatonic philosophy played an influential role in the earliest development of the operatic genre (Donington, *The rise of opera*, Tomlinson, *Metaphysical song: an essay on opera*). It is also well known that the philosophy of the Renaissance Neoplatonist Marsilio Ficino (1433-99) was particularly instrumental to this development. However, what has not yet attracted sufficient attention, is the question of which role the particular Neoplatonic brand of virtue ethics – on several points fundamentally different from the more famous Aristotelian brand – may have played in shaping the ambitions of operatic composers concerning a potential of their works to ethically edify.

I shall attempt to suggest, in a preliminary way, how this question might be approached. It is a question which touches upon the more fundamental philosophical question of whether opera, or music in general, may indeed be an ethical influence on people at all, and if so, on what grounds. Ficino did produce a detailed account of how this might be possible with regard to music, but can such an account – leaning heavily on, among others, a technical concept of the spirit, and a strictly Platonic ontology – be of any use to philosophers today? And is it a useful perspective when asking about the ‘point’ of an opera today?

Jonathan Owen Clark (Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance)
‘Music and (a)historicism’

Andrew Bowie, in his recent book *Music, Philosophy and Modernity*, argues that one of the defining features of music is its resistance to certain types of thinking expressed in propositional terms, coupled with an idiomatic musical opposition to inappropriate subject/object distinctions. But Bowie also shows how this resistance should necessitate an *inversion* of the current methodological status quo in thinking about the relationship of music to philosophy: if this resistance is real, then what does it say about the inadequacies of certain lines of argumentation in philosophy itself, such as those pertaining to philosophies of language, communication and ethics?

The paper sketches a historiography of music that, whilst faithful to this methodological inversion, aims to shed light on different problems in historicist theories arising in the contemporary philosophy of history (including the work of Michel Foucault and Frank Ankersmit), as well as the related historicism of the so-called ‘New Musicology’. The presentation will contain an analysis of three episodes in early music history: Susan McClary’s account of gender construction in the operas of Monteverdi; the role of the object-voice in Renaissance polyphony; and a revisiting and reworking of the ‘harmonic cosmology’ of Johannes Kepler. In considering these examples, I aim to elucidate some aspects of the representational practices of the past (and of the present) that resist straightforwardly historicist readings. Central to this argument is a recognition that music, due to the triangulation and codetermination of subject/object/representation, is always already embedded in what Foucault called ‘epistemic’ formations, but that certain salient features of what music becomes via this embedding cannot be explained by the embedding alone. Most crucially, these features coincide with the musical consequences of the failure of discursive formations to account for their own generating principle.

Ethical perspectives
(St Davids Room)

Mark Whale (University of Toronto)
‘Sincerity in music: the marriage of true sounds in *Le Nozze di Figaro*’

In my paper I develop a notion of musical sincerity, a notion that Roger Scruton invokes when, in *Understanding Music*, he argues that Mozart’s operas “at every point . . . [sift] the true from the false, the virtuous from the vicious, the lasting from the fleeting.” Where Scruton contends that “true” music involves a “dialogue” that the music invites the sympathetic listener to join in – by way of a kind of “extended dance” – I am concerned to unpack the nature of this dialogue. Drawing on Martin Buber’s notion of meeting in *I-Thou*, I argue that a truly meaningful dialogue is not merely a mirrored exchange of ideas or emotions but rather involves the mutually self-critical assessment of that exchange by its two sides. Thus, where, on the one hand, the sincerity of Scruton’s “sympathetic dance” seems reducible to the musical form, or, on the other hand, the sincerity of the music seems reducible to Scruton’s notion of an “idealized form,” the listener may recognize true musical sincerity, not merely in the music’s representation of its elements – phrases, rhythms and so on – but in the self-critical meeting that is *between* them. Similarly, the sincere musical meeting is not simply mirrored in the

listener's sympathetic movements, but, rather, involves, in turn, the listener's work to meet it as he meets himself and to recognize, in all sincerity, its truth. I examine the idea of musical meeting through the aria "Deh, vieni, non tardar," from Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*.

Tere Vadén (University of Tampere)

'Music as symbols: how corrupted is it?'

The polarization of music either to direct non-symbolic experience (as in Schopenhauer's Will) or to a corrupt twin of symbolic language introducing a gap between experience and its expression is a recalcitrant habit of philosophical discussion. An extreme version of the second view is presented by John Zerzan (1994), who argues that (tonal) music is not only a representation of hierarchy but a tool for its reproduction. At the same time, it is this symbolic function that makes possible the psychoanalytic analysis of musical meaning by, e.g., Slavoj Žižek.

However, both of the revolutionary extremes, the Žižekian and the Zerzanian, depend on an oversimplification. Naturalistically, symbolic meaning is built out of something non-symbolic. This is particularly evident in the case of music, which is an unbroken continuum from more or less unreflective (animal) sounds to highly sophisticated (human) music. Consequently, theories that hear music either as irreparable alienation or as a redemptive symbolic movement, run into problems. To take only the latter impasse, how could music at the same time expose the Hegelian "night of the world" (Žižek 2004) and the psychoanalytically readable "semantics of the soul", if the symbolic and non-symbolic strata were not connected? The continuum necessitates a theory of musical experience that allows for an evolution of meaning out of its impure material roots into the most controlled spheres of subjectivity. For the hopes of music as a tool against alienation such as theory is both good and bad news. Good, because even the most petrified forms of music that display a rigid subject-object division are never completely safe from the influx of non-symbolic experience. Bad, because there is no pure or "royal" road to non-alienated experience, not even through music.

Parallel Sessions V (Saturday 2 July, 15.30-16.15)

Cynthia M. Grund (University of Southern Denmark)

William Westney (Texas Tech University)

'Pathways to authenticity in operatic interpretation' (Anatomy Theatre)

What does it mean to characterize an operatic performance as *authentic*? To be sure there are important issues attendant to style, history and performance practice, and the myriad aspects of authenticity have been skillfully presented and analyzed by philosophers of music during the last generation.

This presentation is quite specific. It focuses on the visceral level of concern to performers of any genre: whether or not one's musical expression is authentic in the sense of being believable, honest and compelling. Mastering pronunciation and knowing the literal narrative of an opera is one thing, but how can an opera singer find ways to transcend the libretto in order to really grip an audience through authenticity of a deeper and more personal kind?

Conventional pedagogy can often fall short here, and this is why non-traditional means have been developed by one of the presenters in his "Un-Master Class" workshop for performers. A principal hallmark of this workshop is the active involvement of the audience as part of a proposed "circuit of meaning," both through physically interactive and expressive warm-up exercises that break down barriers at the start of the session, and through interactive and experimental techniques in response to the performances themselves. On this approach, physicality and interactivity provide pathways to authenticity on the part of the performer, as well as providing ways of assessing the degree to which authenticity of interpretation is experienced by the audience. During this process, *loci* for the

emergence of musical meaning appear. In the course of the presentation we will identify and examine these and the role they play in the formation of the meaningful musical whole.

Jason Dixon (University of East Anglia) and Férdia Stone-Davis (Independent Scholar)

Lecture-performance: 'The Given Note: the enactment of meaning' (Anatomy Museum)

This collaborative paper and performance (thirty minutes) will focus on a setting by Jason Dixon of *The Given Note* by Seamus Heaney. It explores the piece's structural features, demonstrating how these facilitate not only attentive listening but the enactment of musical meaning, which in this instance is itself concerned with the process of experiencing and attempting to render experience intelligible.

Attention will be paid to the multivalence of the poem's meaning: the story is recounted of a fiddler who retrieves the *Port na bPúcaí*, a tune barely perceptible to others. At another level, the poem gestures towards the process involved in Heaney's work: he attempts to translate his experiences into words in order to communicate them to others. More generally, the poem embodies a particular attentiveness to experience, one of perceiving the world afresh and striving to articulate this.

Second, the music will be considered. Herein, there is a sense both of straining to perceive and of articulation of that which is perceived. A wash of sound issues a call to attention; a substantial period elapses before the live hurdy-gurdies enter, encouraging focused attention and anticipation of what follows. The live line is fractured and there is a sense of straining to hear, perceive and make intelligible; any clarity is diffused by the resonances of the pre-recorded material.

The voice is embedded within the simplicity of the changing textures of the music and its melodic fragments. Voice and music work in conjunction: the music enacts the attempt to perceive and relate the strains of melody and the words vocalise this. Thus, it is only at the end of the piece that melodic definition emerges and the *Port na bPúcaí* surfaces, sitting above the previous hurdy-gurdy melody and giving sense to the initial apparent incompleteness of its line.

Kathryn Whitney (Institute of Musical Research, School of Advanced Study, University of London)

Lecture-performance: 'What kind of thing is liveness?: preliminary answers from the interior of an operatic voice' (St Davids Room)

When musicians begin to perform a piece of music in concert, they enter into – and at the same time cause – “liveness” to come into being. While “live” is a term many people would readily use to distinguish concerts from recordings, Philip Auslander (2008) has argued that, since our experience of music is always tied to real time, the distinction we make between live and mediated listening is meaningless.

Persuasive though Auslander's theory of liveness may be with respect to the dissemination of musical events to listeners, however, for performers, liveness is different. Liveness is a thing performers create, play into, explore their musical ideas through, experience the contribution of their audience within, and have the power to close when their presentation of a piece is finished. Similar in perceived function to concepts such as “flow” (Augustine), “prolongation” (Schenker), “narrativity” (Newcomb), “performativity” (Austin), or the idea that music “takes shape” (Leech-Wilkinson), liveness is a characteristic or feature or quality or potential of concert performance that both licenses performers to act before an audience and facilitates their musical acting.

But what kind of a thing is liveness, and what are its features? How does it do what it does and how can we know? Can liveness be described in structural or theoretical terms or is it merely a myth, born of nostalgia in a media-saturated world?

Questions about the ontology of liveness in musical performance can lead in quite different directions when posed from the perspective of the interior of the act of performance on the concert platform. This paper-performance will explore how instances of literary and dramatic “voice” in song performance in concert shed new light on the structure of the condition of liveness, a finding with interesting implications for performers, composers and audiences.

NOTES

Supported by:



music&letters
www.oupjournals.org

MIND

Royal Musical Association Music and Philosophy Study Group
website: <http://www.musicandphilosophy.ac.uk/>