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Musical Experience*

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RESUMEN

¿Es una experiencia musical un tipo distintivo de experiencia? ¿Qué relación tienen con tales experiencias los conocimientos técnicos y prácticos de música? ¿Cómo hemos de entender la declaración de un músico profesional que afirma, por ejemplo, que uno “oye el infortunio” al escuchar el concierto para violín n° 1 de Shostakovich? El presente artículo indaga —centrándose en la música clásica— acerca de las condiciones que son o no suficientes y necesarias para tener una experiencia “puramente musical”, con el objetivo de perfilar un marco en el cual puedan entenderse las expresiones típicas relativas a las experiencias de escuchar música. Ilustra además el modo en que diversos debates actuales en filosofía de la música se relacionan con el esbozo de ese marco.

PALABRAS CLAVE: *experiencia musical, fenomenología de la música, implicación imaginativa, representación musical, indeterminación semántica*

ABSTRACT

Is a musical experience a distinctive type of experience? What is the relation between, for example, technical and practical knowledge of music with regards to undergoing such an experience? How are we to understand a claim by a professional musician that asserts, e.g., that one “hears a (certain sort of) hardship” on listening to Shostakovich’s violin concerto no. 1? Focusing on classical music, this paper inquires into what is, and is not, sufficient or necessary for having a “purely musical” experience, with the aim of sketching a framework within which typical expressions about the experience of hearing music can be understood. The paper further illustrates how diverse present-day debates in the philosophy of music relate to the enterprise of drawing up such framework.

KEYWORDS: *Musical Experience, Phenomenology of Music, Imaginative Involvement, Musical Representation, Semantic Indetermination*

Here is a typical remark made by a professional musician concerning a musical experience, one among hundreds throughout and across the musical world: “I find a beauty in the hardship I hear in his music” (American/Canadian violinist Leila Josefowicz, talking about Shostakovich’s first violin concerto in an interview published in BBC Music Magazine).¹ I think that a good deal of the task of finding out what a musical experience is, consists of sketching a framework within which this sort of declaration can be clarified; something that requires a new way of thinking about the relevant kinds of musical experience.

Even if we restrict ourselves to classical music (as I mostly will in this paper), it is obvious that there are many kinds of musical experience. The experience of listening to a Brandenburg Concerto may be very different from the experience of listening to Beethoven’s Third Symphony, and both may be vastly different from the experience of listening to Schoenberg’s Variations for Orchestra op. 31, or to Monteverdi’s *Orpheo*. Indeed, there are so many kinds of experience that any attempt to extract defining features might seem futile or quixotic.

We might try to classify experiences by the age or era in which the work being listened to was composed, or by the work’s genre (orchestral, chamber music, a solo instrumental piece, choral music and song, opera, etc.). Of course, there are many other ways we might classify experiences of listening to music. Two live performances of Beethoven’s *Eroica* can result in very different experiences – differences of orchestra, conductor or venue can influence this (compare a Prom at London’s Royal Albert Hall to a performance at Barcelona’s Palau de la Música, for example). Even when listening to the same version of a piece, the experience of listening live may be very different from that of listening to a recording of it on your iPod. It may, for that matter, be the case that the experience of listening to the first movement of *Eroica* is different from that of listening to the second. Indeed, we might end up with some sort of Borgesesque classification (according to which animals are classified as “belonging to the Emperor”, “embalmed”, etc.).

Nevertheless, we can gain insight into the nature of music through a distinction between kinds of experiences – certainly a more abstract or general sort of distinction than those exemplified so far. This undertaking can be illuminating in connection with issues that have been discussed in recent philosophy of music; or so I argue in this paper.

I

Is there a specific kind of experience that it is reasonable to call a “musical experience”? Can we give at least some necessary and some sufficient conditions to identify an experience as such?

To begin with, what seems to be, at least initially, the *genus proximum* of the species we are after? Obviously, this cannot be something specifiable in acoustic terms, where the relevant parameters are the frequency of the individual sounds, their duration, their intensity, or their spectral composition. Auditive (as opposed to visual, etc.) experiences present a more plausible candidate, until we realize that elements other than the sensorial might be part of the characterization of musical experiences (e.g., imagination). So it seems sensible to adopt a broad construal and agree on the general idea of a lived-through conscious experience, something like what the common noun “*Erlebnis*” conveys in German. In what follows, I therefore use the term “experience” in this broad sense.

Now, of course, a host of factors may be involved in experiences of listening to music: personal experiences related to the music having been heard on some salient previous occasion; personal experiences awakened by the current rendition; the listener’s general mood when approaching the experience; the degree of attention the listener pays; etc. It is obvious that if the subject somehow associates a musical work with, say, happier days, the experience is going to be different from how it would have been had the music not brought to their mind any particular memories; or that, if a subject begins listening when irritated, the experience will probably be different from how it would have been had they been calm. I want to abstract from such personal factors and idealize by assuming that our discussion concerns listeners in some sort of “neutral” mood, say, and in a state of well-disposed attentive listening. We could then apply, as a term of art, the expression “*purely* musical experience” to a (lived-through) experience that thus becomes the focus of our reflections, and which we aim to characterize.

My general idea about such experiences can be stated very briefly: *purely musical experiences are experiences that only music can give*, not simply experiences given by music alone, that is, by music without words. In what follows I will be concerned with the fleshing out of this claim through the description of some (maybe all) main kinds of purely musical experience and their interrelationships.

As it will become apparent, the division between purely musical experiences and other experiences has little to do with distinctions between the technically knowledgeable (or the skilled) and the novice; or between the historically and biographically informed, and the uninformed. For instance, whether the musical experience of a listener who is informed about relevant historical or biographical facts is a purely musical experience, depends on the specifics of the case, as we will see.

II

I will begin by considering experiences that are non-controversially purely musical, and then move on to examine a very different kind of purely musical experience.

Most people who are at least moderately used to hearing classical music in the western tradition (or rock or pop music) have a characteristic experience on hearing what is called a dominant seventh chord; they share the expectation of hearing the corresponding tonic chord, an expectation which is revealed by the sensation of completion when it is indeed heard after the dominant seventh. (Try, for example, playing simultaneously on a piano the notes G, B, D, F, and then simultaneously the notes C, E, G, and C in the next octave up).² This is a characteristic musical experience. Modest as it may seem, a lot or even most of classical music from the XVII to XIX centuries is built mainly on experiences that involve expectations about harmonic, melodic, and rhythmic progressions which are individually just as modest in the same sort of way. Thus, the experience of listening to a work of music from that period includes a characteristic blend of expectations of those sorts which are (more or less skilfully) combined, and then fulfilled or thwarted (again, more or less skilfully). When the latter happens, the music generates characteristic sorts of tension in the attentive listener.³

It goes without saying that such characteristic expectations and tensions can be experienced by (almost) any attentive listeners regardless of their degree of knowledge of the technicalities of music (even if that degree is zero), at least if they have grown up immersed in some way in the western musical tradition.

Again, we find here indefiniteness or indetermination of peculiar sorts. Thus, for example, the chord sequence A, Em7, D is commonly experienced as (what in a technical description is) a movement from the dominant to the tonic via a minor seventh chord on the second note of the scale. However, the same sequence can also be heard as a movement from the tonic chord (A now being the tonic instead of the dominant) to the subdominant chord, via a minor seventh chord on the dominant [Luntley (2003), p. 422]. It all depends on the system of expectations.⁴

Even if these alternative experiences can be had by totally unsophisticated listeners, it is the technically educated listener – who is able to bring theoretical knowledge to the experience – who is in a position to conceptualize what is happening. Because of this, it can be seriously doubted whether the experience of the novice and the experience of the expert are exactly the same in kind, but this does not detract from them both being purely musical experiences.

The example above concerns what is technically called resolution. It has been called “resolution by arrival” by Kivy, who distinguishes another kind of resolution (“resolution by return”). The simplest kind of experience

of the latter phenomenon lies in the recognition that the music is returning to some theme in what is perceived as a sort of recapitulation.⁵ Again, this may be experienced in different ways by the novice and the expert, and again, both kinds of experience are to be counted as purely musical experiences.

Thus, purely musical experiences of the sorts alluded to up to here are experiences of expectation, fulfilment, tension, resolution and the like, that are peculiar to music. They are something that only music can produce and that is undoubtedly a source of excitement and satisfaction.⁶

III

I now move on to consider musical experiences when listening to what are commonly regarded as works of “pure” or “absolute” – as opposed to programme – music. We should begin by recalling that at least some of these works have been seen by some music critics as involving a “plot archetype” (after all). For example, Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony and Schumann’s Second have been said to involve the plot archetype: “suffering leading to healing to redemption” [Newcomb (1984), p. 237]. Some think that this plot archetype can be regarded as the *meaning* of the musical *work* at issue, and some think that this cannot possibly be true [Kivy (1990), pp. 305-308]. However, since our interest is in the (purely) musical *experiences* of a (somehow idealized) listener, we do not have to face this issue – at least not head on.⁷ The issue we are facing is rather whether such a listener can have an *experience* involving “suffering leading to healing to redemption” in some appropriate way; and it seems that, as a matter of the phenomenology of listening, they can.

To simplify the issue, let us ask whether, at some point in the listening process (or perhaps better, for some time during it), the listener can have an experience that involves an event of suffering in some appropriate way. This is simpler and does not beg the original question, because it seems there is no reason why, if the listener can have an experience involving suffering, they cannot have one involving (spiritual) healing and one involving redemption (whatever can sensibly be meant by that obscure word); and indeed, an experience involving a process in which one of these things gives way to the others.

Again, as a matter of the phenomenology of listening, it seems straightforward – in listening to works such as those mentioned above – that one can have an experience involving suffering in some appropriate way. Of course, much of the philosophical interest lies in making clear what this way could possibly be. It seems rather problematic to say that the listener actually experiences suffering in the straightforward sense that they actually suffer [see Levinson (1997)]. Maybe certain listeners do suffer, but assuming that there is general suffering in listening subjects seems to fly in the face of the fact

that in general people want to avoid suffering.⁸ It does not seem much of an improvement to hold, as Kivy does, that since – allegedly – the suffering is in the music as the red is in the apple, an experience of a musical work or a musical passage which involves suffering is like an experience of *perceiving* the suffering. Not only is it not clear how the suffering could possibly be an observable property of the musical sounds, but one could here apply a criticism to Kivy that is closely related to his own criticism of arousal theories, since experiencing suffering, in keeping with the perceptual model, would be akin to smelling a bad odour. This is not a situation we put ourselves in readily, much less repeatedly.⁹ Perhaps, then, suffering is only imaginatively involved, as Walton would have it [Walton (1988), pp. 359-360], and, of course, the point would then more precisely be *how* suffering does become imaginatively involved.¹⁰

Admittedly, there is a genuine issue when it comes to explaining how suffering gets involved in the experience of a musical work (or for that matter, “suffering leading to healing to redemption,” although I do not anticipate any serious additional difficulties here).¹¹ However, the lack of agreement as to *how* suffering is involved in the experience of listening must not blind us to the fact that there is widespread agreement that it *is*. Notice that Kivy’s enhanced formalism allows for this, as is implicit in the brief criticism above of his explanation of the way in which it is involved. (The agreement about plot archetypes is not so obvious, but see below.)

We should pause briefly to consider what this event of suffering that is involved in the experience is. As Walton has illuminatingly explained, emotive properties or events involved in music are abstract along several dimensions. We can *mutatis mutandis* apply what Walton says of the event of struggling (one of his examples) to the event of suffering, and allow that several things can be indeterminate regarding this event: who the sufferer is; what the origin or cause of the suffering is; indeed, even whether a particular event of suffering is involved, or rather an impression or conception of some sort of suffering. Applying what Walton says: “Much the same feeling ... might accompany either an awareness of a particular actual [suffering] or merely the thought of (a certain sort of) [suffering] in general” [Walton (1988), p. 361].

It is because the suffering event may perfectly well be unspecific or undetermined in the ways mentioned, that we cannot really inquire or reflect much about it or even talk about it much. The typical failure of music to differentiate properties and their instances, or event-types and event-tokens, is mostly alien to language and thought (Walton, *loc. cit.*). No wonder then that musical experiences cannot be properly *described* – that their description is so poor. Indeed, what I did above with regard to the experiences of listening to Beethoven’s Fifth or Schumann’s Second was not really to attempt to describe them, but rather only to allude to or “point to” them.

The foregoing is important to dispel possible criticism of appealing to the “plot archetype” idea. Kivy voiced this sort of criticism on the grounds that a plot archetype cannot be determined without determining a plot to begin with [Kivy (1990), p. 306]. The thought seems to be that plot archetypes, being more general and abstract than plots, necessarily result from abstracting away the particularities of the plots. Kivy’s criticism is directed against plot archetypes as providers of the meaning of a musical work, and even if it were right in such a context (something about which I withhold judgement), it would not apply to the analysis of the experience of a work by a listener. Indeed, it is question begging in this context, because it simply does not take into account the possibility of there being, e.g., events of suffering involved in listening to the work which are abstract along the dimensions mentioned by Walton.

Now, it is important to notice that the kind of experiences at issue can, to a point at least, be shared by the listener who is technically sophisticated and the novice who is ignorant of the technicalities of music, whether they are an experienced listener who has listened to a lot of classical music, or not, including perhaps previously having listened to the work they are presently listening to. Furthermore, the information one might bring, so to speak, to the listening experience, is likewise not decisively relevant to determining the basic character of the experience. For example, Schumann’s *Haushaltbuch* reveals that, during the three-week period that it took him to compose his Second, he was going through a hard time that involved struggling and suffering, due to both his physical and mental health. This gave way to a recovery (his letter of April 1849 to D. G. Otten also bears testimony to this). A listener who knows these facts can probably discern the plot archetype in the experience of listening to the musical work without much difficulty, making the experience one which is characterized by just such a plot archetype. However, what is important is that, while listening to the symphony, a listener who knows nothing of Schumann’s personal circumstances can also do the same, even though it is probably considerably more difficult. How many of us, after all, undergo experiences that involve the same plot archetype when listening to Beethoven’s Fifth, despite being completely ignorant of Beethoven’s personal circumstances when he composed it?

Notice that what biographical information does (apart from perhaps providing the potential for a richer experience) is prompt the *thought* or the *hypothesis* that the suffering and the “redemption” involved in the experience are the *composer’s own*. This, however, is unlikely to be part of the experience, which may still involve some impersonal suffering. That is, the thought that Schumann was going through a period of suffering and that this is what he tried to express in certain specific passages of his work, is unlikely to modify the experience significantly. The situation is not unlike what happens in visual experiences of knowingly contemplating Müller-Lyer drawings: one

knows the segments to be of the same length, but goes on experiencing them as being of different lengths.

Biographical knowledge is therefore both unnecessary for determining the basic character of an experience in cases such as the experience of listening to the works cited in the examples, and also insufficient for modifying that character. Thus, in these cases at least, biographical knowledge does not detract from the *purely musical* character of the experience.

IV

What happens in other, more complex, cases? Suppose a listener knows that Berg's violin concerto is dedicated "to the memory of an angel" and knows further that the dedicatee was none other than Manon Mahler, the daughter of Alma Mahler and Walter Gropius (the second husband of Gustav Mahler's widow); an adolescent who died after having suffered from polio for a year. Suppose the listener furthermore knows that Berg also had strong feelings for the young woman in question, partly as a result of having been in love with a woman also named Manon when he was seventeen, with whom he had a son, and contact with whom was made impossible by her family.

What can all this knowledge bring to the experience of such a subject when listening to the musical work? A certain sort of musicologist – perhaps the author of some liner notes – might say that the first movement is a musical portrait of Manon, the second a representation of catastrophe and the third and fourth, representations of submission to death and transfiguration, respectively. This, of course, assumes that musical works or musical passages have representational content; an assumption that has been denied for works of "pure music", but which is widely accepted for programme music [see Walton (1994) for a new perspective on the issue]. We do not need to confront this issue directly, since our concern is with the *experience* of listening to the work, not with the work itself. However, it might, of course, be claimed that if the work represents all those things, then an informed experience of listening to it would include an experience of hearing what is represented, namely: Manon's features, catastrophe, and so on. Alternatively, it would be an experience that includes hearing that those things are musically represented in the corresponding passages. Compare here the experience I have in contemplating right now the picture on the wall in front of me, in which – let us assume for the sake of argument – the door and the window of the painter's house are depicted. This sort of experience can be (and has been) described either as an experience of contemplating those very objects or as an experience of seeing the colours and forms as representing that table, that floor, etc.

It is at this point that we must keep separate: thought and knowledge on the one side, from actual experience on the other. Not because the former cannot absolutely influence the latter (although we have seen this does not easily happen), but because such an influence must occur within the limits of what music can do; assuming, that is, that we continue to be interested in experiences that are purely musical. It is also here that we must take into account the abstract or unspecified character of the events and properties that are involved in listening to music.

There are eight purported experiences to be dealt with in our example: the (alleged) experiences of hearing Manon's features, catastrophe, submission to death and transfiguration; and the experiences of hearing the musical sounds as representing those four things. Let us consider them in turn.

Does the knowledge that Berg attempted a "musical portrait" of Manon in the first movement of his violin concerto make an experience of *hearing* a portrait of Manon in the sounds possible; and what exactly would such an experience be? It just does not sound right (no pun intended) to talk this way. In considering this issue, let us first dwell a little on the notion of a "musical portrait". Certainly such a sort of thing has been attempted, repeatedly. The most paradigmatic example is perhaps Elgar's *Enigma Variations* in which, as is well attested, he attempted to portray his wife and several of his friends and acquaintances musically (the title alludes to the mystery involved in trying to identify which variation is a portrait of which person). Now, a musical portrait cannot be like a picture or a photograph in which we can recognize a similarity with the physiognomy of the individual being portrayed. Neither can it be like a description in words of physiognomic features, such as those found in abundance in literary works. Musical portraits are different from such portraits, it seems, both in the kind of features portrayed, and in the way those features are represented. First, it is hard to think of how the features depicted could really be physiognomic features. It is more plausible to think of some character traits being depicted, and even more plausible to consider certain physical features other than physiognomy, such as, above all, the way people talk or move (whether they talk briskly or gently, or move lightly and gracefully or ponderously: cannot music represent *that?*). Thus, we should concede that the experience of listening to the (relevant part) of the music is an experience that involves some features of an individual. Of course, the experience we have is not the experience of hearing *Manon* move in a particular way, which we could not possibly have: Manon is not there, to begin with. In this respect we are in the same situation as if we were looking at a picture of Manon. It is not *Manon* we perceive; it is the picture that we visually perceive. What we can have when looking at the picture is an experience that is, in certain ways, *as if* we were perceiving Manon. Furthermore, we can *imagine* perceiving Manon; imagine, that is, that we see her fair countenance. Analogously, when hearing a "musical portrait" of Manon, we can have an

experience that is, in certain respects, *as if* we were hearing Manon, and, of course, we can *imagine* hearing Manon (and, for that matter, we can imagine *seeing* Manon move or talk).

Now, it is very important to realize that, while it is true that in the ways described Manon might be involved in the experience of listening to the first movement in Berg's concerto, this is because we know – assuming the story about Berg's intention is true – that *Manon* is who is involved. That, however, could clearly not possibly be revealed by the music; the diverse ways in which music is abstract make it impossible. At the most, the music can cause us to have a perceptual (auditive) experience that is, in certain ways, *as if* we were hearing an (indeterminate) individual talking or moving in certain ways, or else cause us to imagine that that is what we are hearing. One individual, that is, or more than one, because the music alone cannot give us sufficient elements to determine whether there is only one individual involved. Thus, the *purely* musical experience is indeterminate in these ways, although we could say that the experience of listening to the work *augmented* by the relevant sort of knowledge can involve Manon.

We move now to the (alleged) experience of catastrophe. It seems that we would say the same things, *mutatis mutandis*, about aurally perceiving or hearing catastrophe or about aurally perceiving that catastrophe is being musically represented (as I said about hearing Manon's portrait or hearing that Manon is musically represented). One possibility here is that we are dealing with an experience that can be similar in certain ways to hearing the sounds caused by some sort of catastrophe. A more plausible possibility though, I think, is one in which some sort of catastrophe is imaginatively involved. Again, we can be considerably more specific about the catastrophe being imagined if we apply our knowledge of what happened to Manon and to Berg; but, as concerns a purely musical experience, the catastrophe at issue is bound to be unspecified in much the same way as the suffering involved in an experience of listening to Schumann's Second was.

With regard to submission to death and transfiguration things are rather different. Not only can we not possibly have an experience of *hearing* (aurally perceiving) these things, neither can we have an experience that is, in any respects, *as if* we were hearing these things. We are left, it seems, only with an experience that imaginatively involves resignation before death and some sort of "transfiguration"; again, both things that are left unspecified at least in the respects in which catastrophe or suffering are unspecified in the corresponding experiences. Once again, in any case, the purely musical experience cannot involve Manon's or Berg's submission to death or transfiguration, not even imaginatively. That kind of particularity can only be given by the right sort of knowledge.

V

It begins to transpire that a purely musical experience is not necessarily an experience that one has with no extra-musical information, e.g., a biography. We saw above that an experience of listening could relevantly run according to a plot archetype whether one has biographical information about the composer and the circumstances of composition of the work or not. We now realize that biographical information does not prevent an experience from being similar to one with a plot archetype. Although in some respects the experience of an informed listening to Berg's concerto could not be had without the biographical information (e.g., it seems very unlikely that anybody listening to the first movement would be in a condition to say that they are undergoing an experience that is, in certain respects, as if they were listening to a person talking or moving), what is decisive for the question of whether it is a purely musical experience or not is that in all the cases contemplated the experiences are similar in presenting characteristic forms of indetermination, to wit: who the sufferer is, whose movements, a catastrophe for whom, and so on.

It is interesting that, from the point of view of the experience, the distinction between pure and programme music is not that important. This is because listening while knowing the programme is relevantly similar to listening while having biographical information of the relevant sort. Again, although certain experiences simply cannot be had without knowledge of the programme, and this knowledge makes it easier to have certain others, once the experiences are had, one finds that they may present the characteristic underdetermined status of a purely musical experience.

In this paper I have argued that a purely musical experience is of a sort that only music can produce, not simply one produced by music without the assistance of words. Indeed, I feel that the sort of experiences that are on the fringes between these two kinds (experiences that may be difficult to arrive at without any kind of extra-musical background, but that then seem to be of the type that only music can produce) count among the most characteristic musical experiences, and that there is much philosophical interest in trying to clarify claims involving such experiences.

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NOTES

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¹ In the same interview Josefowitz made the following remark: "... through all these years, I'd been listening and reading up about it." As will be seen, I take the content of this remark as very congenial to my analysis of what a musical experience is.

² The concept of expectation was introduced as an important concept in the philosophy of music in Meyer (1956) (see pp. 30-32 and *passim*). The notion of expectation appealed to here is a wider notion, in that it not only encompasses expectations of which the listener is fully conscious (in the sense that the listener would be in a position to name or describe them when they happened) but also the expectations that reveal themselves at a later stage, through the subject's sense of surprise or conformity. Meyer talks of conscious and subconscious expectations, including in the latter category the expectations that make themselves manifest in the way just alluded to (see *loc. cit.*). Their status, however, would probably be better described as conscious, where a dimmer sort of consciousness is involved. It is in this way that we can regard them as part of the experience. This construal is thus better suited to capturing the sensitivities, e.g., about the harmonic implications of a chord, which are discussed in Budd (1985), p. 66. Expectations as part of an experience are considered as states at the personal rather than the sub-personal level, to borrow that useful distinction from Daniel Dennet. It is for this reason that I am wary of the uses of the notion of expectation in works like DeBellis (1995), because DeBellis concentrates most of the time on states (e.g., discrimination) occurring at the sub-personal level (see, e.g., *op. cit.* pp. 61-3).

³ Meyer (1956) is largely a rich study of a host of such effects. It is interesting that Meyer argues that analysis of the affective content of a musical work in a certain style "can be made without ... explicit reference to the responses of the listener", once the norms of the style at issue have been somehow assimilated (*op. cit.* p. 32). The argument is based on the assumed existence of some sort of isomorphism – relative to style – between musical procedures and listeners' responses (*loc. cit.*). Because of this, Meyer claims, "subjective content can be discussed objectively" (*ibid.*). In its context, this seems to amount to the claim that discussing issues relative to the experience of music (and specifically, relative to the content of such experience) amounts to discussing issues of the meaning or content of the works, or perhaps, that discussion of the first issue can be carried on through discussion of the second. However, such a claim seems clearly wrong: although I cannot argue the point in detail here, the present paper should bear witness of the falsity of the claim.

⁴ This example concerns indetermination due to ambiguity, a topic which I do not specifically treat in this paper.

⁵ A return to exactly the same themes is not strictly required (the themes can appear somewhat transformed). Moreover, it may be that the return is not to themes, but to some "key areas" related to them [see Kivy (1993), pp. 319-322].

⁶ In this regard, the kind of experience of the *practically* skilful musician (or the sophisticated listener) who has no theoretical knowledge, belongs in the same broad

family (clearly, only music can produce it). This new sort of experience is present most clearly in jazz.

⁷ I think that analysis of this issue has been much muddled by the failure to introduce the distinction between the two fundamental dimensions of meaning into the discussion: the “practical” (linked in the case of spoken languages to illocutionary force) and the “representational.” However, since my present subject is not meaning, I will not pursue the matter here.

⁸ Including people who are perfectly well prepared to repeat the experience of listening to Beethoven’s Fifth or Schumann’s Second. The response that this is because they are prepared to suffer for the sake of some “higher” aim, I do not regard as plausible [see Kivy (2001), pp. 127-132].

⁹ Because of this, I think that a view such as Kivy’s so-called enhanced formalism has serious problems with the significance music has been given by practically all parties concerned. Indeed, Kivy just takes it for granted that music, as analysed from the perspective of enhanced formalism, can have that sort of significance. Thus, Kivy, in explaining his proposal and dealing with the issue of expression in music (especially with music that is expressive of emotions) says: “I take it as a truism that emotive properties of music, like other of its artistically relevant properties, are inherently *interesting* properties” [Kivy (2002), p. 91]. I agree, but if Kivy were right about the nature of music and its emotive properties, I do not see how they could possibly be interesting properties, or, at least, interesting in the *right* way. Indeed, if the emotive properties of music were simply properties captured by hearing (in the way that colours are captured visually, or olfactory properties are captured by smelling), as Kivy maintains, listening to a sad piece would end up leading us to experience something negative (like smelling a bad odour, as I comment in the text for the case of suffering). Perhaps it is interesting, but surely not in the right way, since the target should be that which can contribute, at least potentially, to explaining the *positive* significance we concede to music. Notice, moreover, that if somebody were to claim that listening to certain musical works is actually the auditive equivalent to smelling a bad odour (perhaps an extreme critic of modernist music referring to, say, Xenakis’s *Phlegra*), this would be irrelevant to the question at issue.

¹⁰ Assuming the imagining has an affective element, is this affectivity due to *what* is imagined or to *how* it is imagined? This debate has been pursued in relation to fiction and representational art, with Walton and Moran as respective representative figures of the two options [see Walton (1997) and Moran (1994); for a recent review of the debate and a new – rather underdeveloped – proposal see Dorsch (2011)]. The debate can be transferred to the case of music.

¹¹ As mentioned, this issue is related to the question of the significance of music, and through this, it is surely of relevance to its aesthetic value. I cannot go into such issues here. One may further wonder how it can be that an experience in which suffering or similar psychological states are involved (or an experience in which the plot archetype “suffering leading to healing to redemption” is involved) can give music the sort of exalted significance that most music lovers give to it. I am not attempting to address this worry here, and so, when I claim that from the point of view of significance certain views about how such things are involved should be deemed problematic, and perhaps some other views much less so, my concern is only to keep

apart non-starters from views that might, at least potentially, be seen as contributing to significance. (And likewise for aesthetic value.)

¹² This hypothesis may well be wrong. Schumann himself may perfectly well try to give musical expression to a feeling of suffering that is nobody's feeling in particular, in the belief perhaps that his own experience had a wider application and that capturing this would give his music a wider significance.

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