

Chapter 9

The Phenomenology of Music: Implications for Teenage Identities and Music Education

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Abstract Many writings about the philosophy of music and music education have focussed on concepts of meaning, metaphor, emotions and expression, invariably from the perspective of the individual listener or composer. This essay develops an alternative, phenomenological approach grounded in the writings of Hegel, Husserl and Heidegger. On the basis of these writers' discussions of musical being, the time of music, and its internal dialectics, we present an understanding of "style" as the primary basis for the mediation between production, musical experience and music learning. The essay suggests that music comes into presence within, and resounds, a nonconceptual and collective socio-historical world, feeding into the identity-formation of, in particular, teenagers. Through this, we offer a way of understanding why, as has often been argued, a purely conceptual music education can never be entirely satisfactory.

Keywords Music • Music education • Music learning • Phenomenology • Nonconceptual • Style • Teenage identities

9.1 Introduction

Many writings on the philosophy or aesthetics of music and music education have focused on terms such as meaning, metaphor, emotions and expression, invariably from the perspective of the individual listener or composer.¹ This essay seeks to

¹For some examples of recent work in this area within the philosophy of music generally see: Koopman, and Davies (2001), Trivedi (2001), Stecker (2001), Zemach (2002), Matravers (2003), Budd (2003), Carr (2004), Kivy (2006); De Clercq (2007), Zangwill (2007). An argument in favour of the nonconceptual in musical experience, which tallies in many ways with our position here, is found in Luntley (2003). Within the philosophy of music education, texts which put the concept of musical meaning centrally, though from different perspectives include Reimer (2003); and Green (1988).

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develop an alternative framework for thinking about music, musical experience and music learning which avoids the above terms altogether, by extrapolating from the writings of three German philosophers. Hegel's phenomenology of music in Part II of his *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art* (1842)² is our starting point; Husserl's *Phenomenology of Internal Time Consciousness* (1905) provides the basis for our thinking about musical time; and three works by Heidegger, *Being and Time* (1926), "The Essence of Truth" (1930) and "The Origin of the Work of Art" (1936), inform our understanding of "musical matter" and the "nonconceptual", though nonetheless historical, nature of music and musical experience. This focus on music's place in the realm of the nonconceptual takes the discussion away from the customary aesthetic concerns mentioned above, and more towards collectivist, rather than individualist and materialist rather than idealist ways of thinking about music, musical experience and music learning. This has implications for identity-formation through music, particularly in relation to that of teenagers. We are concerned only with tonal Western classical and popular music and jazz in this essay. The extent to which the arguments would or would not be applicable to other musical styles could be an area for further consideration.

9.2 Hegel's Phenomenology of Music

We understand phenomenology as a way of thinking about relationships between consciousness and circumstance as a mutual and changing dynamic. Hegel's phenomenology of music brings together music and listeners into a unity, whilst at once preserving their respective identities. In other words, he did not subsume one term, music or the listening subject, into the other, after the fashion of relativism and formalism respectively. So, despite Hegel's central concern with subjective responses to music, he never lost touch with musical particulars. Indeed, about half of the section given over to music in his *Aesthetics* concerns rhythm, harmony and melody.³

Hegel recognised music's ephemeral temporal and sonic nature. Moreover, he used music to advance a new theory of time, as did Edmund Husserl (1905) and Henri Bergson (1910), again from phenomenological perspectives, about 70 years later. Hegel proposed that music, because of its temporal nature, does not stand over and against us as something concrete and fundamentally other, like a statue, painting, novel or poem. Rather, music is ephemeral, and so "volatilizes its real or

²Hegel's *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art* was published in 1835, 4 years after his death. It was later revised and expanded to include lectures that he had given in 1823, 1826 and 1829, and then republished in 1842. The Oxford edition, translated by Knox in 1975, is divided into two volumes which are through numbered. The first volume begins with a general introduction to the three parts (pp. 1–90), followed by the first two of these parts. Volume 2 begins with an introduction to the third part (pp. 613–620), which contains the section on music (pp. 880–958).

³There is a detailed discussion of Hegel's phenomenology in relation to musical experience in Green (1988), which differs slightly regarding the extent to which Hegel allows music's objective status.

objective existence into an immediate temporal disappearance” (Hegel 1835: 905). Because this idea is fundamental to Hegel’s phenomenology of music, it is important to take particular care with two issues that arise from it.

Firstly, the objectivity of the statue, or indeed anything else, whether an art-work or not, was not left unquestioned by Hegel. For him, perception is not simply given. Rather, it is a dialectical unity insofar as consciousness “finds itself” in its objects, whilst at once “cancelling” that objectivity in the act of returning to the self with a conceptual or subjective representation of that object. In so doing, we find ourselves, or become self-conscious, amidst the objective world. Nonetheless, the “thing in itself” still remains “out there”, persisting in this, its irreducible, ontological otherness. In both this, the fundamental otherness of the objective world, as well as that world’s absorption into consciousness as a concept, Hegel understood the subject and its object to be in a dialectical unity, whilst nonetheless standing apart from one another. As Knox, in his preface to the *Aesthetics*, put it:

... self-consciousness knows no distinction between the knower and the known, but consciousness of all else depends on reflexivity, which is to say that consciousness becomes aware of itself by being aware of objects and then by being reflected back into itself from them. Hegel is fond of this metaphor. The eye does not see itself except through its reflection in a mirror. (Knox 1975: x)

The second reason for taking care with Hegel’s suggestion that music “volatilizes its real or objective existence into an immediate temporal disappearance” is because this idea seems to deny music any objective status. But this is not the case, as can be seen in the following discussion of the systematic nature of music.

... the note is not a merely vague rustling and sounding but can only have any musical worth on the strength of its definiteness and consequent purity. Therefore, owing to this definiteness in its real sound and its temporal duration, it is in direct connection with other notes. Indeed it is this relation alone which imparts to it its own proper and actual definiteness and, along with that, its difference from other notes whether in opposition to them or in harmony with them. (Knox 1975: 910)

Music constantly passes away in time. But this, music’s essentially ephemeral nature, does not mean that it is any less objective than anything else.

Having presented these two caveats, we return to Hegel’s idea that music comes into presence, not as an object standing apart from ourselves, but by way of absorption “into an immediate temporal disappearance” because of its ephemeral nature. Music’s realm, therefore, is not that of reason, but that which Hegel called the “inner world of feeling”. Feelings do not find themselves in objects, as does self-consciousness. Hegel compared “self-conscious thinking” with feelings. In the former ...

... there is a necessary distinction between (a) the self that sees, has ideas, and thinks, and (b) the object of sight, ideas, and thought. But, in feeling, this distinction is expunged, or rather is not yet explicit, since there the thing felt is interwoven with the inner feeling as such, without any separation between them. (Hegel 1835: 904)

On the other hand, the inner world of feeling is entirely self-contained as a negative subjective unity.

The inner life in virtue of its subjective unity is the active negation of accidental juxtaposition in space, and therefore a negative unity. But at first this self-identity remains wholly abstract and empty and it consists only in making *itself* its object and yet in cancelling this objectivity (itself only ideal and identical with what the self is) in order to make *itself* in this way a subjective unity. (Hegel 1835: 907)

When Hegel wrote that feelings are only “abstract and empty at first” he intended “at first” to mean “before”, in a logical rather than temporal sense, those feelings are taken up with anything “external”, such as music. Music is absorbed into this inner world of feelings, and in so doing shapes them.

... what alone is fitted for expression in music is the object-free inner life, abstract subjectivity as such. This is our entirely empty self, the self without any further content. Consequently the chief task of music consists in making resound, not the objective world itself, but, on the contrary, the manner in which the inmost self is moved to the depths of its personality and conscious soul. (Hegel 1835: 891)

Hegel thought that music lends substance to the inner world of the feelings because of its similarly ephemeral nature as “mere vibrations” that constantly die away in time.

Before addressing the temporal nature of music, consider how Hegel thought that the self interrelates with time, even to the extent that “time is the being of the subject himself” (1835 p. 908). The cyclical nature of self-consciousness, the dialectic by which it projects itself as an object and then cancels that objectified self by returning to the “subjective self”, is in continuous temporal flux. In this movement, self-consciousness breaks up the undifferentiated continuum of “external” time into differences, spans of time or temporal fields, in accordance with its cyclical nature.

[This] implies an *interruption* of the purely indefinite process of changes ... because the coming to be and passing away, the vanishing and renewal of points of time, was nothing but an entirely formal transition beyond this “now” to another “now” of the same kind, and therefore only an uninterrupted movement forward. Contrasted with this empty progress, the self is what persists in and by itself, and its self-concentration interrupts the indefinite series of points of time and makes gaps in their abstract continuity; and in its awareness of its discrete experiences, the self recalls itself and finds itself again and thus is freed from mere self-externalization and change. (Hegel 1835: 914)

It is important to recognise that music is not *in time*, and neither does it move through time, for this would be to suggest that time is something external, or logically prior to it. Musical time is *how time is* for music and its listeners. Music forms phenomenological time.

Now since time, and not space as such, provides the essential element in which sound gains existence in respect of its musical value, and since the time of the sound is that of the subject too, sound on this principle penetrates the self, grips it in its simplest being, and by means of the temporal movement and its rhythm sets the self in motion (Hegel 1835: 908)

We return to Hegel’s aesthetics of music at the end of this essay. Now we present Husserl’s more detailed conception of musical time, in order to develop Hegel’s understanding of how self-consciousness “interrupts the indefinite series of points” of musical time into spans or fields of presence.

9.3 Phenomenological Time and Musical Time

Music exists but it does not persist. Music is before all else ephemeral, constantly passing away from, and thereby denying, the merely notional points of time that we call “now”. In Heidegger’s words:

The sequence of “nows” is uninterrupted and has no gaps. No matter how “far” we proceed in “dividing up” the “now”, it is always now. (Heidegger 1926: 475)

Most of our awareness of time is governed by clocks and alarms, which register a combination of astronomically and mechanically determined, as if spatial, divisions. Yet when we are alone and relatively passive, perhaps waiting, travelling or resting, we turn in on ourselves and into our own fluid time. Such states of mind are characterised by chronic distraction: the endless, uncontrolled droning on of mind’s “sub-thoughts”, that are more-or-less beyond our control. The temporality of this distracted, “subjective time” is as unintelligible as that of dreams, and can become fragmented under extreme conditions. Nelson Mandela wrote about the distorted sense of time experienced by prisoners enduring extended sentences like his twenty-seven years in prison on Robben Island. His fellow long-term prisoner, Ahmed Kathedra once said that ...

... in prison the minutes can seem like years, but the years go by like minutes. An afternoon pounding rocks in the courtyard might seem like forever, but suddenly it is the end of the year, and you do not know where all the months went. (Mandela 1994: 463)

In such extreme conditions inner, or subjective time, becomes separated from what Husserl called “phenomenological time”.

Husserl, in his *Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*, compared this subjective or “immanent” time with external or “objective time” (Husserl 1905: 24–25), which latter is not available to consciousness beyond its measurement by clocks.⁴ Phenomenological time is neither of these, but the interface between changing consciousness and changing reality. As such, phenomenological time is not a series of discrete “presents” or “nows” but a continuous flow. What is “now” is no more than a notional section of that flow: it may refer to a few seconds, or to an era. For instance, a person can be enjoying a particularly pleasant day when all at once the quality of the day as a whole comes to mind in the instant when they think, “Oh what a wonderful day!” Such moments can take in hours of experience, or even historical epochs. Then again, memory, or what Husserl termed “retention”, might recall the day as a “unity in memory” (1905: 106). Husserl called this past “gist” of the day as a whole not a simple retention, but a “retention of retention” (1905: 107). This distinction marks up the difference between a recent memory that constantly merges with and informs the present – a “retention”, and one that is cut off and distinct from the present – a “retention of retention”.

⁴For another account of Husserl’s theory of time with reference to music see Clifton (1983).

Husserl's discussion of the time of a melody is couched in terms of the retentions of the immediate past.⁵ Music, he said, involves a continuous and constant "running off" of sounds into this past. The content of this running off is implicit within the musical "now" (1905: 104–105). So, whilst we perceive a melody note-by-note, we also accumulate what we have already heard up to the present instant as the "unity in memory" that we apprehend as the "now". Meanwhile, what is "now" changes the character of those retentions that are implicit within that "now".

...everything new reacts on the old; its forward-moving intention is fulfilled and determined thereby, and this gives the reproduction a definite colouring. (Husserl 1905: 77f)

That which is "now" itself becomes a retention as it "runs off" behind, so to speak, some future "now". What is perceived to be now is as one with the unperceived past (1905: 60). "Now" is no more than the leading edge of the past, or the end of what was.

Meanwhile, expectations, like memories, are component parts of what is now. Husserl called expectations "protentions". Protentions arise on the basis of what is now. What is now is constantly, as fluidly as water, moving forwards. It is noteworthy that, because time is of course irreversible, there cannot be a symmetrical relationship between retentions and protentions, but rather they stand in a dynamic dialectic. So, whereas the protentive aspects of musical, or any other form of phenomenological time involve the content of its retentions, retentions do not involve the content of protentions.

Whilst Husserl used the example of a melody to develop his explanation of phenomenological time, he did not account for musical processes and structures, such as how music defines the duration or extent of retentions and expectations or "protention" (1905: 76), by means of periods, up-beats and cadences; or how, at some point during our perception of a melody, the retentive qualities of the musical "now" are taken over by protentions, as we begin to sense how far we are from the end of that protention, and the form that end will take.⁶ These changes involve seconds and fractions of seconds of music. The temporal compression of all the parameters of music – rhythm, pitch, harmony, timbre, texture and dynamics – is astonishing. One minute of music can seem like fifteen minutes of most other experience.

We now turn to the question of the aesthetic object, after which we discuss specifically musical matter.

9.4 Functional and Artistic Materials

As mentioned at the beginning of this essay, the central section of Hegel's chapter on music in his *Aesthetics* (Hegel 1835: 310–333) concerns music's "sensuous materials". But this is little more than what is now called the "rudiments of music":

⁵Smith (2006: 231–33), gave an alternative account of Husserl's theory of musical time; as did Clifton at greater length in the first part of his *Music as Heard* (1983).

⁶L. B. Meyer's music theory is grounded in a similar idea of melodic 'implication' to Husserl's 'protention' (see especially Meyer 1956, 1973).

how “triple time” is notated for instance. So we turn instead to the way in which Heidegger conceived of artistic matter generally, which will then serve as a basis for a discussion of musical matter in particular.

Heidegger’s philosophy is particularly promising for music because one of its principal concerns is with “nonconceptual consciousness”, meaning that range of experience which is not linguistic, or which is “unsayable”. This unusual concern arose from Heidegger’s dissatisfaction with propositional truth, or what he called the “correspondence theory” of truth. We approach his insight into the material of art by way of three stages, on which we will base a model of musical matter. First we turn to his criticism of this traditional understanding of truth, and the alternative that he presents.

In his essay “The Origin of the Work of Art” (1936) Heidegger continued the discussion of truth that he first developed in *Being and Time* (1926), and then again in his essay “The essence of truth” (1930). In the latter, he called the customary understanding of truth one of “correspondence”, because it concerns the correctness of a concept to a thing. But, Heidegger asked, how can there be an “inner-possibility of agreement” between a thing, such as a 10p piece, and a proposition concerning one? The 10p piece is round and metallic, whereas the proposition, which is said to agree with it, is linguistic (Heidegger 1930: 122–123). In order to find a definition of truth that is rooted in being, rather than in propositions, Heidegger turned to our immediate, nonconceptual experience of things, though not to “mere things”, which he referred to as “self-refusing” or unknowable, but to tools and equipment generally. Heidegger’s thinking about equipment is the object of the next, second stage of his discussion of functional and artistic matter.

In *Being and Time* Heidegger pointed out that, because we are so preoccupied with instrumental attitudes, much of our awareness of things is in terms of their functions or use value (1927: 96). Just as the sign always draws our attention away from itself, so too does the tool. Both sign and tool are encountered as being “ready-to-hand”, or, in the English vernacular, as being “handy”, rather than “present-at-hand”, or, again in everyday terms, as “present” (1927: 101–102). Tools do not become present, because our concern is not with them but with the work in hand. Heidegger gave the example of a hammer, the purpose of which is to bang in nails. We do not encounter the hammer by thinking about it for our concern is not with *it* but with our reason for using it (1927: 98–99). Furthermore, a tool can only be handy when it is manipulated in accordance with a purpose, or what Heidegger called an “assignment” or “in-order-to” to which it refers, as does the symbol to the sign. Within this “manifold of reference”, or “equipmental world”, tools are manipulated according to the purpose for which they have been designed. For example, hammering in a nail has the immediate “in-order-to” of fixing, say, the side of a desk. The purpose of the desk is to provide a surface for studying. The “towards-which” of studying is to write an essay, so much so that the writer is unaware of their pen, or of their keyboard and mouse. Because the ultimate “towards-which” is always our individual or collective selves, Heidegger said that we are already ahead of ourselves in our concern with our projects (1927: 99–101).

However, if the hammer breaks and its reliability fails, so too is its manifold of reference interrupted, and the hammer changes from being handy to become present

(1927: 101–102). It stands forth as that which is disrupting the project. But this is only momentary, because the defective equipment immediately becomes something to be mended, and as such is absorbed back into its equipmental context or “world” (1927: 105–106). In other words, something is revealed to us before we put a name to it, in this case, “broken”, broken within the context of, in this case, the “world” of the person mending the desk.

Heidegger continued his discussion of tools in his later essay, “The Origin of the Work of Art” (1936), though now with respect to the useful materials that are worked on in order to produce something. Such functional materials, like tools, disappear in their use. “Equipment” and “material” are synonymous in the following.

The production of equipment is finished when a material has been so formed as to be ready for use. For equipment to be ready means that it is dismissed beyond itself, to be used up in serviceability. (Heidegger 1936: 64)

However, in the artwork the “thingness” of the thing, its matter, is revealed to be of value in itself, or as being *present*.⁷

To be sure, the *sculptor* uses stone just as the mason uses it, in his own way. But he does not use it up. That happens in a certain way only where the work miscarries. To be sure, the painter also uses pigment, but in such a way that colour is not used up but rather only now comes to shine forth. To be sure, the poet also uses the word – not, however, like ordinary speakers and writers who have to use them up, but rather in such a way that the word only now becomes and remains truly a word. (Heidegger 1936: 47–8)

As will be discussed at the end of this essay, Heidegger’s conceptions of “handy”, “present” and “world” can shed light on teenagers’ relationships with music, and thus have implications for the classroom.

9.5 Musical Matter

Now we are better placed to address the matter of music. Consider first the distinction between noise and sound. Noises are dismissed as soon as they are heard because they are “used up” in Heidegger’s sense, rejected out of hand as the unwanted by-product of some, usually known, activity. “Sounds”, on the other hand, like noises, are always sounds of something either more or less welcome: telephones, cash registers or birdsong for example.

Musical sound stands forth from all other sound as sufficient to itself. It is immediately distinguishable from sonic matter partly because notes are far more acoustically focussed than noise (as can be seen through an oscilloscope). Musical sound is characterised by an acceptable balance of “overtones” – a high series of pitches within and above named notes: which give what Hegel referred to as the musical note’s “definiteness and consequent purity” (Hegel 1835: 410). This “harmonic

⁷John Silkin uses the word “haecity” to refer to “thisness” in poetry, by which term he means a similar “coming into presence” as Heidegger (1979: 56).

series” defines the timbre or tone of a musical sound. Musical sounds move and change in accordance with a more-or-less steady pulse, which, because of its lack of differentiation and therefore pattern, is not yet rhythmic. We will refer to this barely musical combination of sound and pulse as *primary musical matter*. Primary musical matter is not yet music, for there are a further two levels of musical matter before it can serve musical creativity.

Secondary musical matter arises from the differentiation of these basic musical sounds. In Western music, secondary musical matter is grounded in the division of the octave – the primary overtone of the “harmonic series” – into twelve discrete and evenly “spaced” pitches, known as the “chromatic scale”. But these notes do not form a scale as such, because they are evenly spaced, and, like a mere pulse, therefore have no pattern, no beginning or end: they merely start and stop. Similarly, in terms of rhythm, when the mere pulse of primary musical matter takes on similarities and differences – downbeat, after-beat and so forth – it becomes patterned into metres – $\frac{3}{4}$, $\frac{4}{4}$ etc.

Tertiary musical matter forms when these evenly spaced series of notes are divided into unevenly spaced scales, which, being poised between similarity and difference, are thereby patterned. As a result of this patterning, scales have a primary note and chord, towards which all other notes and chords are directed. The primary notes of scales are at their strongest and clearest when they are underpinned by metric downbeats. This happens most clearly at cadential points. The combination of patterned pitches and patterned rhythms is the tertiary musical matter that is ready to be formed into music *per se*.

An illustration may clarify this point. We are driving to a pop festival. As we approach the site we begin to distinguish primary and secondary musical matter, in the form of musical notes and a pulse, emerging through the traffic noise, but as yet we cannot hear its tertiary musical matter, let alone any music. Primary, secondary and tertiary musical matter coexist in pieces of music. In this example the various levels of musical matter arise successively as we approach the festival site.

9.6 Hegel and Heidegger’s Dialectics of Art

So far, we have provided an account of musical time and matter. This alone, for Hegel and all other nineteenth-century philosophers of art, would have been insufficient to explain music’s extraordinary power, its transcendence of mere matter. Hegel, and much later Heidegger, thought that the matter of art, which they called “sensuous materials” and “earth” respectively, only took on the real mantle of art in combination with “ideal thought” for Hegel, or “world” for Heidegger. In this section of the essay we enquire into these two dialectics on the way to proposing a different, more material model.

Hegel’s understanding of the nature of art is bound up with his claims for art’s capacity to reveal truth, which probably influenced Heidegger’s thinking about truth generally. Hegel thought that if a work of art is to carry the possibility of truth it

cannot be reducible to its material or “sensuous” being, but rather “stands in the *middle* between immediate sensuousness and ideal thought” (1835: 38). (This conception of “ideal thought” is coextensive with Idea, Spirit and the Absolute in the *Aesthetics*: xiv.) Neither the perceived sensuous materials of the work of art, or the transcendent, unperceived Idea that it embodies, can take precedence over one another. Both must be present in a dialectic.

... art’s vocation is to unveil the truth in the form of sensuous artistic configuration, to set forth the reconciled opposition just mentioned [between sensuous material and Ideal thought], and so to have its end and aim in itself, in this very setting forth and unveiling. (1835: xiv)

To find an equivalent dialectic in Heidegger, we resume our earlier discussion of the way that he understood artistic matter in “The Origin of the Work of Art”. As an example of how the matter of a work of art is *not* used up, Heidegger turned to Van Gogh’s painting of a pair of peasant’s shoes. In this essay both mere things and equipment are referred to as “earth”.

The “self-refusing” materiality of the shoes, by which Heidegger meant their “unknowability”, can only be brought forth and revealed with an intensity that is unique to art; or can only “be true”, by the way in which the painting evokes the broader context of the world of the peasant.

Under the soles slides the loneliness of the field-path as evening falls. In the shoes vibrates the silent call of the earth, its quiet gift of the ripening grain and its unexplained self-refusal in the fallow desolation of the wintry field. (Heidegger 1936: 34).

The peasant woman ... has a world because she dwells in the overtness of beings, of the things that are. Her equipment, in its reliability, gives to this world a necessity and nearness of its own. (1936: 45)

Heidegger uses the term “world” in this passage in a particular sense to imply an over-arching context, similar to the artisan’s “manifold of reference” as discussed above, though much greater, within which things emerge, or “thing” for artistic experience.

The world worlds, and is more fully in being than the tangible and perceptible realm in which we believe ourselves to be at home. World is never an object that stands before us and can be seen. World is the ever-nonobjective to which we are subject ... (1936: 44)

Heidegger’s idea of the “ever-non objective to which we are all subject” refers to the fact that this world can never be predicated, and so can never become objective. It will play an essential role in this essay because it is to this nonconceptual world that music belongs.

The work of art combines earth and world, in a similar way to Hegel’s “sensuous materials” and Idea.

The setting up of a world and the setting forth of earth are two essential features in the work being of the work. They belong together, however, in the unity of work being. (1936: 48)

This unity is not an easy one but a continuous striving between the two terms, not so much against, as between one another; a striving in which earth and world preserve their mutual independence *and* their interdependence.

In essential striving ... the opponents raise each other into the self-assertion of their natures. (1936: 49).

But, whilst Hegel's general aesthetic theory, as expounded in his introduction, rests on the dialectic between "sensuous materials" and Idea, there is no mention of the latter in the section on music. This can be attributed to his fundamental identification of music with feelings, which in Hegel's scheme have no access to the Ideal. It would seem that this was the reason why Hegel did not rate music as highly as literature and art in his hierarchy of the arts. Despite this essential part of Hegel's dialectic having been thus denied to music, we will retrieve some of Hegel's ideas on the subject later in this essay.

There is also a problem in relation to thinking about music in Heidegger's "The Origin of the Work of Art". Despite his critique of the correspondence theory of truth, and his concern for the nonconceptual, and despite his idea of the stone of the sculpture and the paint of the painting being brought forth and held as "earth" in its dialectic with "world", both "earth" and "world" are bound up with representation in his discussion of Van Gogh's painting. Both the shoes and the peasant's world are represented, or referred to by the painting after the manner of concepts. However, Heidegger's idea of the preconceptual "world" in "The Origin of the Work of Art" will prove to be most pertinent at the end of this essay. However, we prefer the term "nonconceptual" rather than "preconceptual" because we do not want to suggest any primacy for either the conceptual or the nonconceptual worlds.

Both philosophers pointed to a dialectic in works of art between their perceived matter and something unperceived that goes beyond that matter, and which brings that matter into presence *as art*. In both cases this unperceived "something other" is of a completely different order to the matter of the work of art. Both Hegel's Idea and Heidegger's "world" imply something far greater and more complex than any one piece of music, something at the level of an era, epoch or *zeitgeist*. But this "something other" that lets music come into presence need not be of a different order to music when music's world is understood in terms of "style".

9.7 Mediation by Style

The combination of primary, secondary and tertiary musical matter that we advanced earlier is not music *per se*. Like Hegel's "sensuous materials", tertiary musical matter, such as scales and metres, require something else to become music. This something is customarily called "style", which signifies not "fashion" but a musicological and philosophical category with a specific meaning.⁸ Within music education Green (1988/2008) has emphasised style as a crucial element in the stratification of musical knowledge, as reproduced by the education system; and later we will go on to

⁸L. B. Meyer was probably the first music theorist to place such importance on style. See (1956, 1967, 1973).

argue how this relates to the issue of teenagers' identity and its presence in the classroom. Style is the system by which musical matter becomes music; and, as such is usually equivalent to fourth level musical matter. Style, like "Idea" and "world", is imperceptible as such. Nonetheless, "style", *unlike* "Idea", is "musical", in the sense that it is a set of musical conventions for organising musical matter into pieces of music. So this conception of style is material rather than transcendent, rather than metaphysical as is Hegel's Idea and Heidegger's "world". Music is brought down to ground, as it were, by style.

Style differentiation does not only involve changes of fourth level musical matter, but sometimes also changes of third, and even second level matter. For instance, whilst the shift from the Classical style of the later eighteenth century to early nineteenth-century Romanticism represents a change of fourth level matter, the shift from late nineteenth-century tonality to the serial music of the Second Viennese school, because it involved a rejection of tonality, took the form of a change of secondary musical matter. Moreover, John Cage's "ambient" and chance music, as compared with pretty well all earlier music, represents a change at the primary level of musical matter of notes rather than noise.

It is particularly important when thinking about music education to consider the general stylistic differences between classical and popular music. Whilst classical music tended towards atonality in the twentieth century, popular music has preferred modal, pentatonic and "blues scales" as its tertiary musical matter. Whilst classical music in the second Viennese school and its followers made any pulse imperceptible and almost did away with beat, popular music lays great emphasis on both. Dynamics, apart from detailed accentuation, are far less important to popular music, most songs remaining at roughly the same dynamic level throughout. Timbre, on the other hand, has been vitally important for popular music's development, in the form, for instance of changing guitar sounds and ways of producing the voice, sometimes involving pre-primary level, or 'non musical' sounds known as "dirt". Popular music's rhythmic tertiary musical matter is also distinct from that of classical music. For instance, much popular music and jazz has been characterised by a play of surface, millisecond differences, sometimes known as the essentially non-conceptual notion of "feel", or what Ford has elsewhere called "contrafflection" (Ford 1998).

Furthermore, "style" is not only an "objective" quality of music, but is also a condition of consciousness in the form of listeners' familiarity with a style. All musical experience depends on the interweaving of the style of a particular piece of music and listeners' familiarity with that style, which we call "musical competence", after the fashion of "linguistic competence" (Eco 1976: 4; also see Green 1988). Familiarity with style pulls itself up by the bootstraps of its experience because every new piece contributes to listeners' "style-competence". Because producers contribute to styles with every new piece they produce, and because listeners become increasingly familiar with those styles, they are dynamic, historical.

When a listener does not have the necessary familiarity with a style, there can be no such accord, which might lead them to say "that's not music", or "that sort of music always sounds like that", whereas in the former response, perhaps even

tertiary musical matter is not recognised as such. In the latter, a particular piece sounds only as an example of an unfamiliar style, and consequently has no particular identity.

Whilst musical competence is learnt it does not necessitate any ability to conceptualise music. People often say, as if apologetically, “I don’t know anything about music”. Not only listeners, but musicians who have acquired their skills and knowledge primarily through informal learning are apt to make such statements, and to consider themselves to only “know” about music to the extent that they can apply labels to it such as “modulation” and “middle-eight”; and/or to the extent that they are able to read notation. Furthermore, when musicians are teaching, there is a tendency to consider that concepts are of prime importance. Even musicians who initially develop their skills and knowledge informally, and without attaching concepts to them, often have a tendency to start applying concepts as soon as they are in a professional role as teacher (see Robinson 2012; Green 2001, 2008).

But there is nothing to know, in the sense of conceptualise, about music’s non-conceptual nature. Indeed, freedom from musical concepts can perhaps enable a “purer”, since nonconceptual musical experience.⁹ On the other hand, such conceptual “props” can assist sustained musical attention. We will discuss how greater and lesser competence with nonconceptual “subjective style” has profound implications for listening, learning to listen, and thus for music education. It must be emphasised that conceptual and nonconceptual are not discrete or mutually opposed realms of consciousness, but are always intertwined, informing one another. A purely nonconceptual musical experience is at least improbable. Nonetheless, musical competence requires only attentive and repeated listening to representative pieces in any one style. Every new musical experience contributes to deepening and broadening listener’s musical competence.

Because of the shared necessity of style for both musical production and musical reception, *style is the primary form of mediation between music and listening*. Music only exists insofar as it is the incarnation of a style. Reciprocally, style is only perceived insofar as it becomes incarnate in pieces of music. This is unlike the way in which Hegel’s perceived “sensuous materials” and Heidegger’s perceived “earth” are opened up by their dialectical union with unperceived “Ideal thought” and “world” respectively, because now both terms – piece and style – are essentially musical. There is nothing transcendent about music. Indeed, it is probably at the level of style, rather than any one particular piece, that music resonates the socio-historical circumstances of its production and reception.

The philosophical significance of this conception of style is far-reaching. Think, for instance, what form Kant’s *Critique of Judgement* would have taken if he had presented his notion of *sensus communis* in terms of style. We leave this question to Kant scholars. Meanwhile, questions of musical access and distribution, together with listeners’ various and diverse responses, continue to be discussed by sociologists

⁹See also Luntley 2003 on this topic.

of music and music education.¹⁰ In the context of the present essay, we think of these issues as forms of secondary mediation, in the sense that musical style as primary mediation logically proceeds them. When, as we will discuss in the last section of this essay, style is understood in this way, it can throw light on some of the issues that teachers encounter in the classroom.

9.8 Musical Worlds Within Worlds

In this section we consider how music comes into presence within what can be thought of as the “world” of its style, and within Heidegger’s understanding of “world” as a nonconceptual historical totality: worlds within worlds.¹¹ But first, let us consider the power and the limits of nonconceptual experience.

The nonconceptual world, which is an all too often neglected aspect of collective consciousness, is of necessity closed to predication. As such, although this might seem contradictory at first, it is of immense significance. Its power over our lives is so powerful *because* we cannot predicate it, and are in this sense directed by it, or are as if victims of it. Thus nonconceptual consciousness can have more power over our lives than conceptual consciousness. This world is that of our desires and our fears, and all those perceptions that are beyond our control: sounds and smells, both of which have such enormous power to recall our past. It is a world of vagary, of soft edges and fluidity.¹²

The “conceptual” and “nonconceptual” are far more inclusive terms than Hegel’s understanding of reason and feeling. Just as information is conceptual though not the whole of reason, so too is music nonconceptual but not the whole of feelings. Concepts and “nonconcepts” are as one within most experience, and it is only when listening to music in a completely unfamiliar style, that we do not automatically identify instruments, ways of performing, verses and so forth. Usually, musical concepts can help nonconceptual musical experience insofar as they can provide toe-holds for concentration. As mentioned above, “Pure” nonconceptual listening may give the most pure and profound musical experience, but it is probably rare.

How can music be thought to render incarnate in sound, or give voice to, not only the world of its style but also the greater, non-musical, nonconceptual world of which it is a part? Haydn’s music, on the one hand, and the blues on the other, provide

¹⁰For some examples see: Becker (1963), De Nora (2000, 2003), Frith (1978), Green (1988), Hennion (2003), Leppert and McClary (1987), Martin (1995), Shepherd et al. (1977), Small (1977), Willis (1978), Wright (2012a, b).

¹¹Bowie (2007) presents a profound philosophical argument as to why music might be able to transcend modernism’s challenge to the limits of language. An interesting application of Heideggerian thought to music education, this time in relation to composition, is to be found in Naughton (2012); and a discussion of the importance of the processes of musical engagement in relation to Heidegger’s thinking and music education is provided in Lines (2005).

¹²Both the necessity and the vagary of the preconceptual world are illuminated by the ideas of ‘God’ in Christian theology, and ‘Tao’. See Lao Tzu (1963), especially paragraph XXI, p. 78 and XXV, p. 82.

starkly opposed examples of how music comes into presence in different relationships with its style, and in this way brings into presence very different worlds.

Haydn's remarkable ability to transform mere scraps of the secondary musical matter of the Classical style into distinctive music contributed to and arose from the late eighteenth-century European Enlightenment's fascination with empiricism and sense perception. Thus his music brings into presence, or "resonates with", firstly the world of the Classical style, and secondly with the "nonconceptual" totality of the Enlightenment.

On the other hand, *a* blues of the sort that was recorded in the 1920s and 30s in the US Deep South, and which continues to be produced today, is a mere strip off *the* blues. The style's riffs, licks and sung phrases were freely plundered and reordered by individual singers. So, rather than resonating with the valued aesthetic unity and unique originality of Classical music, *a* particular blues resounds not its own particular identity, but *the* blues as an anonymous, collective style-world. Whereas Haydn's music *develops* its style, the blues *insists* on it, thereby resounding the enduring and seemingly indelible shadow of absolutely unindividuated slavery.

Whilst we can still hear the resonance of both Haydn's music and the "Delta Blues" today, their worlds remain more-or-less distant from us. Music can open a door on foreign or past worlds, but, as with all history, what we hear coming through that door is only what music affords to us from where and when we are listening.¹³ For this reason, we distinguish between *resonating* and *resounding*. Whilst music from the past has the potential to *resonate* with the nonconceptual world of its production (within the terms of a particular style), music of our own time can *resound*, in the sense of give voice to, our own world.

Nowadays in many parts of the world the music that most clearly holds the promise of resounding "our" world, or "the" contemporary world, is popular music. This is most especially so for teenagers, for whom popular music is akin to "the soundtrack of their lives". Yet in most reception contexts and practices, popular music is listened to in a "distracted" way. Many teenagers, at least under the age of fourteen, declare that they do not listen to "music" but "only to lyrics", and that they experience music as "just a big block of sound" with undifferentiated parts. A number of examples of this are available in Green (2008: 73–84), where teenagers discuss their music-listening experiences. Moreover, these particular teenagers were only in a position to make these kinds of claims, because their listening had been required to deepen, through being asked to listen "purposively" in order to play music from a recording by ear. It was only after that experience, that they could make such statements, because it was only then that they were able to differentiate their earlier, distracted or, in Heidegger's terms, "handy" listening experiences from their new experiences of musical presence. They could now describe how they heard music as being made of "layers", with "underneath bits". Another example is the way that many of the same teenagers, on being asked to copy music

¹³ Gibson (1986) used the term 'affords' to mean the possibilities that anything offers to interpretation. This has been applied to music notably by Moore (2002), De Nora (2000) and Clarke (2004).

by ear, started by playing the rhythm of the main melody line or vocal line on the drums, as if under the impression that the drums play pitches. This was also a manifestation of hearing music as “nothing but lyrics”, or as “just a big block of sound”.¹⁴

How can popular music resound anything when, as is so often the case particularly amongst young teenagers, it is not actively listened to, but only heard in a distracted manner as the “handy” background for some other concern? Because we have no “ear-lids”, and no need to turn towards the source of sound, we are far more vulnerable to it than we are to visual perceptions. Sometimes we can feel almost as if victims of our sonic ambience, which we hear but try *not* to listen to. Pieces of popular music, whatever their value and however casually they are listened to, resound their contemporary world for even the most distracted listeners. It is precisely because popular music is often *not* listened to attentively, and consequently not controlled by conceptual reason, that it can take on so much significance – precisely because it is not fully brought to consciousness. It is the very distracted or “un-listened” to way that so much pop is heard that gives it such potency. Popular music is of the utmost importance for the formation of teenage identity, because it resounds teenagers’ collective nonconceptual world, and consequently goes on to become an essential part of our adult identity. In this sense, we are what we have heard.

Of course there will be children, typically young instrumentalists, singers, or composers, for whom popular music and/or classical music, comes into presence, but they are in the minority. Even among those who take classical instrumental lessons, nearly all youngsters today are primarily wrapped up in various styles of popular music and their associated sub-cultural worlds.

9.9 Musical Presence

Hegel said that music does not present itself as being apart from the self like an object, but enters into the time of the negative unity of self-consciousness, shaping it, as it were, from within. We quoted the following passage earlier:

... what alone is fitted for expression in music is the object-free inner life, abstract subjectivity as such. This is our entirely empty self, the self without any further content. Consequently the chief task of music consists in making resound, not the objective world itself, but, on the contrary, the manner in which the inmost self is moved to the depths of its personality and conscious soul. (Hegel 1835: 891).

Hegel’s identification of music with the object-free realm of the feelings can be read to refer to the way that “feelings” are generally thought to be ill-defined, abstract or ideal. But musical experience is neither “inner”, of the “soul” or “spirit”, or absolutely individual. Rather the reverse, for pieces do not throw listeners into inwardness, but rather open them out to a nonconceptual world which, whilst

¹⁴On the drumming phenomenon, see Green (2008: 48–9). For some examples of teenagers’ listening habits see Hargreaves and North (1997, 1999).

registered individually, is also *collective*. So, rather than having individual control over music, we offer ourselves up to musical experience within the freedom of a collective style. This idea is in accord with Kant's grounding of aesthetic judgement in universal subjective validity, (Kant 2000: 99–101) though, and this is most important, with "universal" substituted.¹⁵

Levinas proposed a similar idea of listeners giving their individual ego to music, in a way that is close to Hegel's thinking, though in the following he writes about rhythm alone.

Rhythm represents a unique situation where we cannot speak of consent, assumption, initiative or freedom, because the subject is caught up and carried away by it. The subject is part of its representation. It is so not even despite itself, for in rhythm there is no longer a one-self, but rather a sort of passage from oneself to anonymity. (Kant 2000: 99–101)

Because of the ephemeral nature of sound, it has only a transient and insubstantial objectivity. Mere sounds recede and are absorbed into the preconceptual ambience of the everyday world. Whilst music is absorbed in this way, it nevertheless stands forth *as music*. Music brings sounds into presence in the most incredibly compressed, complex and detailed patterns of sound in time, measurable only in milliseconds. When we are involved with music we are absorbed into this, its fine web of temporal similarities, differences, structures and processes: its various fields of presence and their inter-relations. Music is the only art that forms time through sound, and then so much so that listeners' intentional time *becomes* that of music. In Hegel's words, music thereby "penetrates the self, grips it in its simplest being" (Hegel 1835: 908). But, this "gripping", rather than being inner and individual, and "expressing feelings", frees us from the fragile limits of the individual ego, delivering us over to the collective anonymity of musical style, whilst also perhaps, resounding the collective anonymity of the nonconceptual world.

The truth of music, in the sense of Heidegger's idea of truth as revelation, is its coming into presence by standing forth from mere sound *as music*; and this together with (though not necessarily so) its resonance or resounding of a nonconceptual world. Musical revelation, its glorious passage into transcendent anonymity as musical presence, can resound entirely new and unfamiliar ways of being in the nonconceptual temporality that is peculiar to it. Music dissolves all distinctions between subject and object, me and them, reason and feeling, fears and desires.

9.10 Implications for Music Education

Hegel's, Husserl's and Heidegger's phenomenological thinking can reveal the power of the nonconceptual in our lives. More particularly, Hegel and Husserl show how music forms subjective time, and thus how it has immense power over our

¹⁵It could well be argued that Kant's idea of 'universal subjectivity validity' is equivalent to Heidegger's 'world'.

consciousness; whilst Heidegger's distinction between the "handy" and the "present" throws philosophical light on musical experience: we can think of "distracted" musical hearing as handy, whereas "purposive" listening has an involvement with musical presence. All three ways of thinking can help to explain the powerful effect of popular music on the fragile consciousness of young people, which makes them so vulnerable to popular music itself, its world and the subcultures that it resonates for them. Thus music education should foster the nonconceptual, and attempt to bring music – any music – from heard, distracted awareness into musical presence.

Music education has to continue building upon ways that evade objectives, assessment-led and conceptually oriented educational policies. Swanwick persuasively argued for the recognition of the essentially nonconceptual nature of music and its experience in terms of the importance of "acquaintance knowledge", as opposed to conceptual "knowledge how" and "knowledge that" (Swanwick 1994). As he says, no amount of "knowing that" certain musical facts exist or "learning how" to play musical instruments can be sufficient conditions for stimulating musical understanding and learning. The nonconceptual nature of music makes it difficult to assess students' musicality other than through the assessment of their performance or composition, closely sticking to agreed, conceptual criteria. Thus latent musicality is not picked up; its apparent lack may be left unattended, and so often this apparent lack becomes a part of the young person's self-concept, which they take into adulthood.

Current music education practices and research are tackling this kind of problem by bringing into the classroom a range of what here we would call "nonconceptual" musical practices based on "purposive" listening and on musical experience itself.¹⁶ Rather than teaching the "whats" and "hows" of popular – or any other music – some teachers are applying some of the ways that popular and other vernacular musicians learn to the music lesson. In many such contexts students choose their own music to play or sing, and their friends with whom to learn, and outside conventional structured music teaching that proceeds from simpler to more complex music. Thus what the students like – what they "are" in the profound nonconceptual sense of their musical "world" – is what they do in the classroom, quite irrespective of its difficulty. We believe that such approaches are truly critical because they can awaken students' distracted, or "handy" hearing of popular music, by bringing forth their hearing into listening, and thus into true musical presence.

¹⁶A few examples of practical work with teachers and students include: Abrahams et al. (2011), Andrews (2013), Baker (2013), Baker and Green (2013), Chua (2013a, b), Chua and Ho (2013a, b), Costes-Onish (2013), D'Amore (2011), Feichas (2010), Gower (2012), Green (2008, 2014), Ho (2013a, b), Jeanneret et al. (2011), Karlsen (2010), Lebler (2007, 2008), O'Neill and Bespflug (2012), Price (2005, 2006), Wright (2011, 2012a, b).

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